

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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**'1843'**

*by* CYRIL CONNOLLY

**MR. WILLKIE'S WORLD**

*by* PETER CROMWELL

**FOUR RUSSIAN PORTRAITS**

*by* KSAWERY PRUSZYNSKI

**DAVID JONES**

*by* H. S. EDE

**FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—X**

*by* AUGUSTUS JOHN

POEMS *by* PAUL ELUARD

REPRODUCTIONS OF DRAWINGS *by* DAVID JONES

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***Edited by Cyril Connolly***

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# HORIZON

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1843



1943

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## '1843'

*"Il faut vivre avec les vivants."*

*"Ce n'est pas vrai. Il faut vivre avec les morts."*

LET us escape for a moment to the year 1843, and see what can be learnt from it. 'What I call trifles are often read with curiosity and avidity a hundred years later, even though the writer may be a very commonplace, ordinary person like myself', wrote Greville, on 7 May of that year, and in order to recapture the flavour of that summer exactly a century ago, we can begin with no richer authority. But we must not confine ourselves to him, for Greville is one of those writers whose mind is set in the rigidity contracted from his early surroundings: he belongs in spirit to the Regency, and to the eighteenth-century Whig tradition. In reading his journal for 1843, in spite of his proximity to the centre of politics, we feel him to be old-fashioned, and the great people who appear in his pages seem already out of date. Another night, Moore sang some of his own Melodies, and Macaulay has been always talking. Never certainly was anything heard like him. He is inexhaustible, always amusing and instructive, about everybody and everything. . . . The drollest thing is to see the effect upon Rogers, who is nearly extinguished, and can neither make himself heard, nor find an interval to get in a word. He is exceedingly provoked, though he can't help admiring, and he will revive to-morrow when Macaulay goes. It certainly must be rather oppressive after a certain time, and would be intolerable, if it was not altogether free from conceit. . . . He said that he read no modern books, none of the works or travels that come out day after day. He had read "Tom Jones" repeatedly, but "Cecil a Peer" not at all; and as to "Clarissa", he had read it so often that, if the work were lost, he could give a very tolerable idea of it, could narrate the story completely, and many of the most remarkable passages and expressions.' . . . 'Subjects are tapped and the current flows without stopping.'

'Macaulay went away the day before Christmas Day, and it was wonderful how quiet the house seemed after he was gone, and it was not less agreeable. Rogers was all alive again, Austin and Dundas talked much more than they would have done, and, Lord Lansdowne too, and on the whole we were as well without him.'



Macaulay's Essays were published in 1843, and they form one of the dozen important books to come out in that year. He is the only writer with whom Greville seems in touch, for politicians are notoriously reactionary in their literary tastes, and Greville moves only in the exclusive society of Holland House, the great country houses, and the racing stables of Newmarket, where his sense of quiet (after politics and gambling his strongest passion) is not slow to pursue him. 'And this is the sort of society which I might have kept instead of that which I have', he writes of the Bowood Christmas just mentioned, and on 31 October 1843, crippled with gout, he returns to the theme. 'And this is called society; and amongst such people I have lived, do live, and shall live—I who have seen, known, and had the choice of better things. Eating, drinking, and amusement is the occupation of these people's lives, and I am ashamed to say such has been mine. I was reading Charles Lamb's Letters in the carriage, and very remarkable they are, among the very best I think I ever read. I was struck by one passage, which I applied to myself: "I gain nothing by being with such as myself; we encourage one another in mediocrity." This is it. We go on herding with inferior companions, till we are really unfit for better company.' Yet a few days before he had been present at an unsuccessful lunch where Macaulay met Ranke (whom many think the greatest of historians) and had been on a visit to Richmond to Mary Berry, the old friend of Horace Walpole. 'She said nothing could be more beautiful and touching than his affection for her, devoid as it was of any particle of sensual feeling, and she should ever feel proud of having inspired such a man with such a sentiment.' In August he had visited the new royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, 'luxuriously fitted up, but everything is sacrificed to the comfort of the Court, the whole ship's company being crammed into wretched dog-holes, officers included', and on 8 August he had recorded a conversation with the Duke of Wellington at which one would have given much to be present. The Duke had given his opinions on the Duke of Marlborough, and defended his spelling, his morals, and his communications with the Pretender, the acting of a double part 'that was no more than many men in France did during Napoleon's reign'. 'The Duke then talked of the military genius of Marlborough, and said that though he was a very great man, the art of war has so far advanced since his

time that it is impossible to compare him with more modern generals; and unquestionably Napoleon was the greatest military genius that ever existed.' . . .

Among other interesting old men, there were, of course, Beckford, wrapped up in ancestor worship in his tower above Bath (he died in the following year), Landor, whose *Imaginary Conversations* were then appearing, Sydney Smith, and Wordsworth, who became Poet Laureate in that year, but doubtless Rogers would have been the most worth meeting, for alone he seems to have cultivated that art of living in the present which robs old age of so much of its terror. The Banker-Bard of St. James's Place, famous for his malice, his whisper, his corpse-like face, his breakfasts, his expensive editions of his mediocre works, his friendship for Byron and Wordsworth, Porson and the family of Fox—this old man of eighty, who had once rung Johnson's door-bell and run away in panic, kept all the latest books on his table, and made friends with their authors. Tennyson in particular, whose most important volume of poems had come out in the previous year, and been reprinted in 1843, was often invited, and seldom came. Aubrey de Vere describes a typical meeting between them. "“Wordsworth” he [Tennyson] said to me one day, “is staying at Hampstead in the house of his friend Mr. Hoare; I must go and see him; and you must come with me; mind you do not tell Rogers or he will be displeased at my being in London and not going to see him.” We drove up to Hampstead, and knocked at the door; and the next minute it was opened by the Poet of the World, at whose side stood the Poet of the Mountains. Rogers's old face, which had encountered nearly ninety years, seemed to double the number of its wrinkles as he said, not angrily but very drily: “Ah, you did not come up the hill to see *me* . . .” As we walked back to London through grassy fields not then built over, Tennyson complained of the old poet's [Wordsworth] coldness. He had endeavoured to stimulate some latent ardours by telling him of a tropical island where the trees, when they first came into leaf, were a vivid scarlet, “Every one of them, I told him, one flush all over the island, the colour of blood! It would not do, I could not influence his imagination in the least!” The anecdote reveals Tennyson's own preoccupation with the exotic, with those tropics he never visited and indeed increasingly disapproved of, but which were



his symbol of the wild, natural, unrepressed and truly poetic life, free from politics, marriage and duty, tropics which played such a lovely role in the imagery of his poems, in the 'Lotus Eaters', the 'Voyage of Maeldune', in 'Eugene Aram', and in 'Locksley Hall'.

'... Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the trailer from  
the crag,

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of  
mind,

In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing  
space;

I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.'

One might say, in fact, that 'Locksley Hall' and 'Ulysses' are the two poems most typical of young England in 1843, of the conflict, on the one hand, between Victorian optimism, the belief in progress, science, industrialization and the white man's burden, and those other feelings, which were opposed to it—the doubts and misgivings, religious, philosophic and political, which we find in the Oxford Movement, in Chartism, in Clough and Arnold, in the unprogressive behaviour of Irish and Indians or the events of 1848. Tennyson, our greatest poet of the last hundred years, might have been one of the greatest poets of the world if he had listened to his instinct alone, if he had not permitted his reason to enforce the doctrines of the day, not felt it his duty to be a philosopher-bard, a state-mouthpiece, rather than a wild and sensual voice of protest, a dying swan. The core of Tennyson's genius is voluptuous, surcharged with indolence and passion, and heavy with decay. The two 'Marianas', the 'Lotus-Eaters' and many others of the early (1830) poems show this. By 1842 the new poems were becoming orthodox and didactic, till in *In Memoriam* the triumph of the official poet over the bereaved lover is finally assured [Maud represents a rebellion against the age, a desperate rear-guard action, yet the madness of the principal character robs him of criticism of the power which it might have had if backed by all Tennyson's authority.] FitzGerald was the first to withdraw his admiration, and to hint that he considered the 1842 volumes to



the high-water-mark of his poetry. Meanwhile the Tennyson of 1843, under forty and enjoying his first real literary success, must have been unconscious of the conflict which was expressing itself in him, and which was to work itself out in *In Memoriam* and set the diamonds of his lyrics in the cheap paste of his argument, an argument never on the unpopular side. He was still melancholy and somewhat ascetic, even at his dinners at the Cock, where a 'perfect dinner was a beef-steak, a potato, a bit of cheese, and a pint of port, and afterwards a pipe (never a cigar)'. Among his friends at that time with whom he discussed the new inventions of science and their political implications, the role of the poet, etc., were now Carlyle, Rogers, Barry Cornwall, Thackeray, Dickens, Forster, Savage Landor, Maclise, Leigh Hunt, and Tom Campbell. Carlyle, in a letter to his new friend Emerson [*circa* 1843], describes him thus: 'One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusky dark hair; bright laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking, clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculations free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to.' One of his most prized letters of the year must have been from Dickens (10 March '43): 'For the love I bear you as a man whose writings enlist my whole heart and nature in admiration of their Truth and Beauty, set these books upon your selves; believing that you have no more earnest and sincere homage than mine.' These works were to be enriched during the year by *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *A Christmas Carol*, novels which added the words 'gamp' (from Mrs. Gamp's umbrella), 'hecksniffian', and Scrooge to the English language. Thackeray was not at his best in this year, for he produced only his *Irish Sketch Book*, and in the year following *Barry Lyndon*. It was, however, a very fine year for solid and profitable novels; Eliza Follen published *Windsor Castle*, Lytton *The Last of the Barons*, never *Jack Hinton*; and Mr. Jorrocks set off for his earthbound immortality in Surtees's *Handley Cross*. Lover's *Handy Andy* came out in 1842, and Disraeli's *Coningsby* in 1844, while the young rontë sisters were learning and teaching in Brussels.

Of the other poets besides Tennyson, Browning published *A Blot on the Scutcheon*, Southey died, and Wordsworth became Laureate. Eighteen hundred and forty-two saw, besides Tennyson, Wordsworth's poems, *Early and Late Years*, and Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. Eighteen hundred and forty-four brought Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Poems*, and also those of Milnes and William Barnes. Perhaps the best-known poem of our year was Hood's 'Song of the Shirt', which appeared anonymously in the two-year-old *Punch* and set it on the road to financial success. The most impressive poem, however, was surely Richard Horne's epic *Orion*, published at a farthing 'to mark the public contempt into which epic poetry had fallen'. The epic told an Orion myth of a struggle between the senses and the intellect somewhat similar to that of Prometheus, and according to Gosse was 'an attempt to re-establish the union which had existed in ancient times between philosophy and poetry'. Three editions at a farthing and three more at a higher price were exhausted within a year, and Poe pronounced *Orion* 'superior even to Milton's *Paradise Lost*'. Who will exhume it?

In other works of the intellect the year is outstanding. The most important work of this kind was John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic*, Darwin's *Structure of Coral Reefs* came out in 1842, and Newman's *Essay on Miracles* in 1843. The essayists were busy. Carlyle's *Past and Present* heads the list, for those who can read him; Landor, Leigh Hunt (*Imagination and Fancy*), De Quincey, FitzGerald, Beddoes were all in bloom, and Wilson in Edinburgh published his *Recreations of Christopher North*; two remarkable travel books appeared, Borrow's romantic *Bible in Spain* ('43) and Kinglake's more robust *Eothen* ('44), but the work of the imagination which most breathed a new spirit was the first volume of *Modern Painters*, 'by a graduate of Oxford', which came out in 1843 when Ruskin was twenty-four. The graduate (he had taken 'an honorary fourth') had originally intended to call the book 'Turner and the Ancients', but even so the defence of Turner, then painting his most exaggerated works, and of Nature and the Gothic against all comers was an immediate success. The poet Rogers allowed the book to lie on his table. Tennyson, supreme nature-lover, begged for the book, and Sydney Smith in the *Edinburgh Review* rightly declared that 'it was a work of transcendent talent, presented the most original



views, and the most elegant and powerful language, and would work a complete revolution in the world of taste'. Those talent-potters who feel that even twenty-four is rather old may like to wonder if they would have helped to take the chill off the reception of Ebenezer Jones's 'morally unwholesome' and youthfully defiant' poems, *Studies of Sensation and Event* (1843), or if they would have noticed anything special about the poem in Cromwell with which an undergraduate won the Newdigate that year. They might indeed have spotted Matthew Arnold. But what about Cory who was twenty, Meredith who was fifteen, Butler who was eight, and Swinburne who was six? Would they have been guided to them?

\*                      \*                      \*

There is no space to treat of literary events at much length outside England, but to complete the picture of the year's output one might mention that the tales of Poe and Hawthorne were appearing in America, as well as Emerson's *Essays* and Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*. Melville was in the South Seas, Longfellow had just been the guest of Dickens, Irving had gone to Spain, Whitman was twenty-four, Henry Adams was five, and Henry James new-born.

In France the prospect is more exciting. Hugo, Lamartine, Musset, Gautier, Sainte-Beuve were all in spate, George Sand was producing some of her best work (which Thackeray was shocked by), Balzac, after his famous preface of 1842, was bringing out the whole *Comédie Humaine* as a work complete in itself (*Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Lys dans la Vallée* belong to 1843-4); while three young men, two born in 1821, reached crises in their lives; Claudel came back from India, Flaubert had a nervous breakdown, and Renan went to the Saint-Sulpice Seminary to train for the priesthood. During the year 1843 appeared one of the most mysterious poems ever written, so much the best poem of the year, so prophetic in instinct, so modern in feeling, so classical in form, that it is worth printing entire, if only to inspire an English translation.

#### DELIFICA

Ultima cumaei venit jam carminis aetas.

La connais-tu, Dafné, cette ancienne romance,  
 Au pied du sycamore, ou sous les lauriers blancs,  
 Sous l'olivier, le myrte, ou les saules tremblants,  
 Cette chanson d'amour qui toujours recommence? . . .

Reconnais-tu le Temple au péristyle immense,  
 et les citrons amers où s'imprimaient tes dents,  
 et la grotte, fatale aux hôtes imprudents,  
 Où du dragon vaincu dort l'antique semence? . . .

Ils reviendront, ces Dieux que tu pleures toujours!  
 Le temps va ramener l'ordre des anciens jours:  
 La terre a tressailli d'un souffle prophétique . . .

Cependant la sibylle au visage latin  
 Est endormie encor sous l'arc de Constantin  
 et rien n'a dérangé le sévère portique.

GÉRARD DE NERVAL.

★

★

★

But if one could assign any one movement in France to the year 1843 it would be not so much a literary one, as the birth of a myth: the myth of Paris. It was in 1843 that the idea first took shape of Paris as the capital of the world, luxurious and elegant, yet also mysterious; the sprawling industrial Babylon with its romantic underworld of squalor and vice. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) began to yield their fruit. The supreme example of the myth is Eugene Sue's *Mystères de Paris* (1843), an interminable serial of high life and the underworld whose illustrations gave Max Ernst his *collages*, and show us for the first time the spread-eagled bourgeois corpse on the street corner, or the drowned prostitute floating just under the surface of the newly constructed St. Martin's Canal. Hugo's *Notre-Dame* and *Les Misérables* were historical novels inspired by this feeling. Vidocq's *Les Vrais Mystères de Paris*, *Les Mystères du Grand Opéra* (Lespes), *Les Mystères de Londres* (Feval), *Les Rues de Paris* (Kugelman)—all appeared in 1843-4, as well as that extraordinary compilation of Gavarni, Nerval, Sand, Balzac, Gautier, and others, *Le Diable à Paris* (1845). It was still the golden age of the romantic illustrator—Nanteuil, Tony Johannot, Gavarni, Lami, Dévéna, and that surrealist genius, Grandville. His *Un autre Monde* (1844), recently the subject of an article by John Rayner in the *Architectural Review*, is the book of all this period that it is most delightful to possess in its original form.

From 1846 onwards Baudelaire was to give himself up to this cult of Paris and modern life which was inspired by his youthful enthusiasms for Balzac and Guys. He saw both the romance, the æsthetic possibilities, and also all the boredom and



ror of urban life on a grand scale, 'la noire majesté de la plus  
 quiétante des capitales'. The current of modern sensibility  
 which was to lead to *Lautréamont*, *A Rebours*, *Dorian Gray*,  
*Ulysses*, *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, the London  
 ones of *Prufrock* and of the *Waste Land*, and to so many of our  
 st detective stories and films, which was to compel Chirico to  
 int his grief-stricken and sonorous colonnades, the poetry, in  
 ct, of the city grown large enough to devour those who live  
 it, no longer a mere flowering into stone of the surrounding  
 dscape, but a monster which men have created out of their  
 eed to feed on them: all this lyrical realism, this pride in their  
 stroyer, comes from the research into Babylon engendered by  
 e genius of Baudelaire operating on the more innocent en-  
 siasm of the authors and illustrators of 1843, and on the  
 lzac of *Vautrin* or the *Histoire des Treize*, to answer  
 udelaire's own question, whether the poet's own time possessed  
 e beauté particulière, inhérente à des passions nouvelles'.

★

★

★

And yet, so luminous is the spirit of an age, we can see now,  
 oking back to 1843, as if looking at children in a class room,  
 hich artists are creating and which are marking time, which,  
 e Baudelaire, Grandville and Nerval, are of our period; which,  
 e Hugo and Tennyson, Balzac and Dickens, are of their own;  
 l which belong in fact to the past, despite their illusion that  
 y were of their so vigorous present, like the French gourmet-  
 iters or Macaulay and Greville. Past, present and future exist  
 the arts simultaneously, according to our courage or our  
 lination we are all free to choose. Thus, while the Paris of  
 3 was fermenting with talent and forward-looking inspiration,  
 ile 'Delfica' was being written, Greville a hundred and fifty  
 es away was taking his summer holiday on the Rhine, admiring  
 brand new railway and the food on the steamer, the volume  
 the water, but not the scenery (inferior to the Wye), and,  
 r many pleasant *tables d'hôte*, was reposing in Baden. The  
 t surrounded him, he seemed to bring it with him, to smell  
 ut, even being so fortunate in Frankfort, when visiting the  
 pidated ghetto whose streets were once locked at night, as  
 come across 'in this narrow gloomy street and before this  
 etched tenement, a smart calèche fitted up with blue silk,  
 a footman in blue livery at the door. Presently the door

opened, and an old woman was seen descending a dark narrow staircase, supported by her granddaughter. Two footmen and some maids were in attendance to help the old lady into the carriage, and a number of the inhabitants collected opposite to see her get in.' It was the old mother of the Rothschilds, then aged ninety-four, who all her life had never been out of Frankfurt nor inhabited any other house there than the one in which she had resolved to die—and so back again to the life at Baden: the newspapers in the club, the dinners and the drives, the evening in the garden—'Then I sit with any friends I find at a little round table, in the cool of a delicious evening, eating ice and drinking what I please, a band of music playing, and the odours of newly mown hay, orange trees, limes, and roses, wafted on every gale . . . Every now and then one saunters into the magnificent room where the eternal play goes on, and the monotonous voice of the *croupier* "Le jeu est-il-fait? Messieurs, faites vos jeux" wears the air. These creatures sit hour after hour, peddling with their florin stakes, and assiduously marking cards with pins, till between ten and eleven the gardens are gradually deserted, and at eleven a kind of curfew tolls the knell of day departed, and gambling ends. A bell rings, which is the signal for general dispersion at the closing of houses of resort. The lights in the rooms are extinguished, and the weary *croupiers* retire. The police drive people even out of the hotels, and long before midnight no sound is heard in Baden but the waters of the river gurgling over their pebbled bed.'

Such is the life of pleasure. Outside time, exempt from time, the same in any age, an invaluable trance in which those worn out in the battles of time can take their convalescence for a little. 'Faites vos jeux, messieurs': which shall we choose?—a lifetime of pleasure, immune from all the horrors of life except the one supreme horror of finding that life has by-passed us, and of finding it out only at the last moment, when the unused potential of the mind is about to crumble into dust—or a lifetime of belonging to the age, fighting its battles, espousing its causes, wallowing in its optimism, or its fashionable pessimism, enjoying its respect and gathering its praise? We can be Browning or Tennyson, Ruskin, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer. Or a life altogether outside the age, a life of epicureanism like FitzGerald's, renouncing everything except Horatian comfort, taste and a kind heart.



d unloading a few copies, sold for fourpence on a barrow, of chance translation from the Persian which will captivate posterity and place all that selfish life above reproach? Nobody need be anything they do not want to; they can spend their whole life (like John Allen, who died in 1843) in being a perpetual guest, with no private existence at all, at whatever is the modern equivalent of Holland House—or they can live like Lord Hertford (died 1842) who was driven round London in his last illness and carried every afternoon by two footmen up the steps of a hotel, or die in 1843 like Hölderlin after forty years in an asylum. And yet there is always the other life which does not fade from time behind the skirt of pleasure, nor, underneath the umbrella of duty, ignore it, but which defies it, and defies it intelligently, to triumph over time in the end. This is the life of those artists who are ahead, who so identify themselves with reality, the reality of the spiritual discoveries of their time, that they achieve a complete timelessness in their art and through the intensity of their vision become identified with the future. It is to this visionary class that Baudelaire, Nerval and Perkegaard, whose 'Repetition' or 'Fear a Trembling' came out in 1843 belonged, and that Tennyson and Browning just failed to follow, through a certain cowardice and backsliding which made them draw back into the conventional world of Victorian optimism when they divined in what direction they were going, and what the consequences would be. It is indeed a terrible choice, to decide whether one would have preferred to be Baudelaire with his Bohemia, or 'Lawn' Tennyson with his country houses. But, if 1843 has a lesson for us today, it should be that of all forms of compromise the most tragic is that made between an artist and a genius, when only talent remains after the compromise.

Yet there is one other lesson for us writers of today, which 1843 seems to ram home somewhat uncivilly. Of course this is a bad year—we are at the most exhausted moment of a war, the moment before victory, and our writers are mostly otherwise occupied—yet we are also, or so all of us under forty believe, the products of a peculiar and unique process: the modern movement, the renaissance to which we belong by birth and which puts us in quite a different position to all those who have preceded us and who have not had our advantages in being post-war, post-1918, post-Einstein, post-twentieth century. I do not wish to

say anything against the period to which I belong, a period which has had the unique experience of beginning where all other periods have left off, nor do I wish to find fault with the generation which has succeeded it. Only after comparing the years we live in with this our centenary I seem to hear Time, like Greville's weary croupier, cry 'Faites vos jeux' and to feel a wish to cry out to the chosen and privileged generation of 1900-10, and to the still more privileged generation of 1910-20 who are coming up for air, 'We are unique, I know, but there may be someone—shall we say in 2043?—who might conceivably wish to write an article like this. You do see what I mean? Not that there's any real hurry.'

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Besides the books mentioned many facts in this account come from Harvey's *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, invaluable for hasty writers. I am also indebted to Mr. Hugh Walker's *Literature of the Victorian Era* (Cambridge), to Frederic Harrison's *Life of Ruskin* (English Men of Letters), and Hallam Tennyson's *Life of his father*, also to Roger Caillois, *Le Mythe et l'Homme*, to Greville's *Memoirs*, the *Table Talk* of Samuel Rogers. MacLise's *Portrait Gallery*, Henry Bidon's *Paris* and *The Annual Register*. But most of all I owe a debt to the men of 1843, for never have so many stray allusions, random thoughts or unexpected coincidences led me so directly to a goal. I am now so attuned to the year that I can tell at once, blindfold in a bookshop, which works printed or written in that year lurk in a corner, and find my way straight to them. A line enters my head, such as 'La connais-tu Dafné', and I know at once that when the poem is traced the usual date will be there. It may be that the Past, when one attacks it, is such a mine of cross-reference that one is automatically handed from one author of the period to another; may be that nothing is lost, that once the right file is found everything else follows, or it may be, as I prefer to think, that the spirits of our era are as greedy of print as were their forbears in Hades of human blood; that they seek contact with a living mind as hungrily as they once queued up for a living body; and that, the word having gone round, no subterfuge was too petty to draw my attention, by dreams, omens, and suspicious encounters, to the fact that so-and-so had had a little thing published in 1843, and that such-and-such a book had lain for



few moments on Samuel Rogers's table. If I have omitted any other English classics I can only say that their authors have had plenty of warning. My skull has become a drinking-cup which the dead hold in turn to the fountain of life.

★ ★ ★

Of the prophecies made in the year I have rejected Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall', with its 'aerial navies', 'ghastly dew', 'federation



s'agissait pour tous ces peintres, travaillant comme des fourmis menacées  
un orage, d'avoir terminé leurs tableaux avant l'époque irrévocablement fixée  
pour l'examen; et déjà la figure de leur juge leur apparaissait avec terreur dans  
un aveugle impartialité.'

of the world', etc., as too well known. The same is true of Macaulay's New Zealander surveying the ruins of Westminster. I have not tried to deal with Kierkegaard and I have chosen instead Grandville's drawing from *Un Autre Monde* of the judge whom the artists of 1843 look to for their eventual recognition. The figures '15, 20' refer to 'Quinze-Vingt,' the hospital for the blind. The prophetic date, the half-classical half-romantic draperies of the Rhadamanthus of posterity and its other deformities, explain themselves.

PAUL ELUARD

## SUR LES PENTES INFÉRIEURES

Aussi bas que le silence  
D'un mort planté dans la terre  
Rien que ténèbres en tête

Aussi monotone et sourd  
Que l'automne dans la mare  
Couverte de honte mate

Le poison veuf de sa fleur  
Et de ses bêtes dorées  
Crache sa nuit sur les hommes.

## LE ROLE DES FEMMES

En chantant les servantes s'élancent  
Pour rafraîchir la place où l'on tuait  
Petites filles en poudre vite agenouillées  
Leurs mains aux soupiraux de la fraîcheur  
Sont bleues comme une expérience  
Un grand matin joyeux

Faites face à leurs mains les morts  
Faites face à leurs yeux liquides  
C'est la toilette des éphémères  
La dernière toilette de la vie  
Les pierres descendent disparaissent  
Dans l'eau vaste essentielle

La dernière toilette des heures  
A peine un souvenir ému  
Aux puits taris de la vertu  
Aux longues absences encombrantes  
Et l'on s'abandonne à la chair très tendre  
Aux prestiges de la faiblesse.

## DOUTER DU CRIME

Une seule corde une seule torche un seul homme

Etrangla dix hommes

Brûla un village

Avilit un peuple

La douce chatte installée dans la vie

Comme une perle dans sa coquille

La douce chatte a mangé ses petits.

## COUVRE-FEU

Que voulez-vous la porte était gardée

Que voulez-vous nous étions enfermés

Que voulez-vous la rue était barrée

Que voulez-vous la ville était matée

Que voulez-vous elle était affamée

Que voulez-vous nous étions désarmés

Que voulez-vous la nuit était tombée

Que voulez-vous nous nous sommes aimés.

These poems are from *Poesie et Verité*, 1942 (Paris), which will appear shortly in England with parallel translations by Roland Penrose and E. L. T. Messens.

## PETER CROMWELL

## MR. WILLKIE'S WORLD

## I

MR. WENDELL WILLKIE has written a book<sup>1</sup> which sold in America over 400,000 copies within the first fortnight of its publication. No other book has ever approached this record in the history of publishing.

Mr. Willkie's profits will not be only financial. His book should bring him more votes than dollars. For Mr. Willkie, as everyone knows, is hoping to be President in 1944 and has turned the accepted rôle of a defeated Presidential candidate upside down. Instead of retiring into obscurity he has continued campaigning just as if his goal had always been to become President in 1944, and the 1940 election was just a rehearsal. Since his defeat he has seldom been out of the headlines and his activities have culminated in his taking, with the consent and aid of President Roosevelt, two highly dramatic journeys. The first was to Britain during the *Blitz*. The second was last autumn

<sup>1</sup> *One World* (Simon & Schuster, New York).



when, in forty-nine days, he flew round the world, travelling 31,000 miles, visiting more than a dozen nations and talking intimately with many of the world's leaders.

The actual time in the air was only 160 hours, allowing a month on the ground. His route was Minneapolis, New York, Washington, West Palm Beach, Puerto Rico, Belem (Brazil), Natal (Brazil), Accra, Kano (Nigeria), Khartoum, Cairo, El Alamein, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Bagdad, Teheran, Kuibishev, Moscow, Tashkent, Urumchi (Chinese Eastern Turkestan), Lanchow, Chengtu, Chungking, Sian (all in China), Chita, Yakutsk, Seimchan (all in Siberia), Fairbanks (Alaska), Edmonton (Canada), Minneapolis.

But it isn't only that Mr. Willkie's book reports his impressions of his fantastic journey that made nearly half a million Americans immediately go out and buy it, and that caused it to be more discussed in reviews, editorials, on the radio and on the platform than any other published book (except that world best seller: the Bible). It is the fact that this book dramatizes an advance in communications that is in process of transforming the history of mankind.

## II

Throughout history, communications have been a governing factor in the development of socio-political organization. Away back in the time of the ancient Mediterranean civilizations, several thousand years before Christ, the first step in the technical evolution of communications came with the development of writing on clay and later on strips of papyrus reed. This enabled messages to be sent far afield without the need for the correspondents to meet together and talk. (It also enabled messages to be sent down the ages of history for thousands of years.) Then came the taming of the camel, of the ass, and later of the horse and its harnessing to wheeled vehicles. This was a great step forward in the speed with which people and goods could be sent from place to place. Then came another form of communication: the introduction of money. This brought with it a greater expansion of trade, and therefore of wealth, but at the same time convulsed the economic system of the world at that time and laid at the feet of mankind a plethora of problems. (Compare the Keynes proposals for an International Currency Union.)

But these advances in communication greatly stimulated

thought and the spread of ideas and knowledge. Out of them grew the great world religions, starting with Buddhism and Confucianism in the Sixth Century B.C., and the brilliant flame of Greek thought and culture in that same century. Followed the revolutionary teaching of Jesus which struck with terrifying impact the established thought and behaviour of society. Jesus was, after all, the first champion of the Common Man, the first great internationalist. It was the existence of communications, albeit then still in a comparatively primitive form, which enabled his words and the ideas they stimulated to encircle the globe and resound down the centuries.

Six hundred years later the great Arab conquests from Kashgar to Poitiers made possible the Saracenic renaissance and introduced into Christendom from China the art of making paper: another immense step forward in communications development. Printing followed naturally, and thus the tools of the European renaissance were at hand.

In the sixteenth century came the invention of the sailing ship which, by aid of the mariner's compass, could traverse the oceans. Thus the Americas. Printed books became sufficiently cheap for recorded learning to be widely communicated to classes of individuals for whom it had hitherto been beyond reach.

The fruits of all this burst suddenly into exciting tempo in the nineteenth century when the invention of the steamboat and then of railways increased the speed of travel by ten times that at which it had been stabilized for two thousand years. Almost overnight the world shrank to a tenth of its former size. There followed with almost bewildering rapidity the electric telegraph, the underseas cable, electric light and power, the telephone, wireless, radio telephony, radio transmitted photography and television. Parallel with these staggering advances in communication of symbols and power came the transportation communications of the giant steam-driven ocean liner, and the internal combustion engine, making possible first the automobile and finally Mr. Willkie's Consolidated bomber.

The reason why Mr. Willkie's journey has caught the imagination of millions is that its speed reduced the size of the world to one-sixtieth of what it was when Napoleon knew it. But just as such a phenomenal growth in communications makes many new and better things possible, it inevitably brings with

it an innumerable host of problems. Of some of these problems Mr. Willkie gives us an indication.

### III

The one vital world factor which impressed itself on Mr. Willkie's imagination is this—*Asia is on the move*. That is the real message of the book. In the Middle East, in China, and in Siberia he found a stirring of national consciousness, a determination to throw off interference from the West however it might be disguised in mandatory or other form,<sup>1</sup> a realization that the Oriental peoples can make use of modern technology for their own purposes. All that is required is education and then the fruits of Western progress will fall into their hands. The myth of the superiority of the White Man has gone for good. And the nation to which the Orient owes its liberation from this idea is Japan: Pearl Harbour and Singapore were the culminating ruptures which brought down the structure.

It was the Japanese, after all, who showed how a nation could step straight from the stage of feudalism to that of a great modern industrial state missing out all the stages in between. In the lifetime of some people living today, Japan was still basking in the Middle Ages, completely shut off from the world, as it had been from 1638 to 1865, ignorant of and untouched by the great advances in thought and technology through which the rest of the world had been struggling. Yet in 34 years, by 1899, Japan had industrially and technically caught up with the West, had traversed the road that the rest of the world had taken over 250 years to cover. And it must not be forgotten that in 1905 she went to war with a great European power, Czarist Russia—and *defeated her*. Although Japan is now the enemy and potential tyrant of the East, her example and struggle may result in the liberation of the Orient from its strangling traditions and taboos, may have let in the fresh winds of knowledge and science, may have thrown open the sluice gates of immense political movements and power.

Mr. Willkie came to the conclusion that while the Western

<sup>1</sup> When talking with one of the high officials of the Lebanon Mr. Willkie asked him where his sympathies lay in regard to the struggle between the French and British for the control of Syria and the Middle East. 'A plague on both their houses,' replied the official.



owers had brought certain real benefits to the Arab States, if the Arabs were left to run their own show they would 'change the world they live in'. Clean up, by means of adequate plumbing and public health services, the disease permeating these Arab civilizations, thus banishing the devitalizing effects of bilharziasis, dysentery, cholera, malaria, and dozens of other diseases, and educate the illiterate Arab masses in the science of modern industry and agricultural methods, and what may you see? You may see one of two things. Either a repetition of the great Arab expansion following the preaching of Mohammed in the seventh century A.D.; or a great partnership between the Arab world and the rest of mankind with immense advances in living standards for both.

It may be that Mr. Willkie's impressions were too naïve. It can be argued that the Arabs are a different people temperamentally from the Japanese, that they suffer seriously from the strangling influence of the Moslem doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

It can also be justifiably demonstrated that the Arabs will be dependent on considerable help from the West, not only in capital goods and machinery, but in technical advice and education in the matter of using them. The *Economist* of 13 March 1943 wrote: 'The M.E.S.C. (the Middle East Supply Centre) has opened up the need of a great programme of technical education and development which could obviously best be carried out jointly by the United Nations through a centre such as the M.E.S.C. . . . The work of the M.E.S.C. in the industrial as in the agricultural sphere has brought to light the Middle East's need for more technical training, for wider education, for bigger capital investment than any one Government can afford. . . .'

But no less an authority than H. A. R. Gibb, Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford, reminds us that 'the Arabs of today are very different from the Arabs of 1915. What they have achieved in the intervening years would be incredible to those who have not been warned by their past history *how swift is their response to changing circumstances and how sudden their political development.*'<sup>2</sup> (The italics are mine.)

<sup>1</sup> One factor militating against economic advance is that the Koran forbids the lending out of money on interest.

<sup>2</sup> *The Arabs*, Oxford Pamphlet on World Affairs, No. 40.

## IV

Mr. Willkie visited the Siberian republic called Yakutsk. Its area is more than five times that of France, and its population 400,000. Its resources are great and as yet hardly touched. Under the regime of the Soviets, Yakutsk is being developed. Mr. Willkie was met by the leading citizen of that republic: president of the Council of People's Commissars of the Yakutsk Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, he called himself. This gentleman showed Mr. Willkie the sights of the capital (also called Yakutsk), a town with a population of 50,000. He showed him the town library of 550,000 volumes where the records showed that over 100,000 people had used books during the previous nine months, many coming from surrounding districts. He was taken to the theatre to see gypsy opera performed by an Leningrad Company on tour, he was shown in the museum examples of the two commodities which are the present main sources of Yakutsk wealth: gold and furs. He was proudly shown the new modern cinema. He was told that before 1917 only two per cent of the people of Yakutsk were literate, ninety-eight per cent could not read or write; and that now the figures are reversed. He was, in fact, bombarded with facts and figures demonstrating the immense steps made in the development of the resources, in the improvement of the agricultural output, and in the harnessing of modern technology to developing the fruits of this part of the earth. And these fruits, which the Russians have discovered to exist in Yakutsk, include silver, nickel, copper, lead, oil, fish, lumber, and salt. There is even a great store of ivory in the form of tusks of the prehistoric mammoth which used to roam in these parts.

But the most significant thing Mr. Willkie found in this remote town near the Arctic Circle was the similarity to the American West of the last century. The way people talked reminded him of the way his own father and their friends used to talk. There was the same pride in achievement, the same crudity, the same determination to get results. The same land of vast opportunities was there, waiting to be filled up. It was the atmosphere of the frontier town all right. Mr. Willkie came away 'with a powerful curiosity to know what it will look like ten years from now'. I wonder too what Yakutsk will look

ke ten years from now, and even more what the whole of that vast area of the world's surface called Siberia will look like forty years from now.

In China it was much the same story. Mr. Willkie entered China from the West and it is the undeveloped West which holds the great potential. In the capital of Sinkiang province, and in that of Kansu province and in the country between those cities, there was again that similarity to the American West when it was first being developed.

As the Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot, M.P., has pointed out:<sup>1</sup> 'The industrial revolution is going to spread all over the world, be it or not. It is impossible for one portion of the planet to take a mortgage on the rest for showing it the way how. The forces are too big. We are about to witness, for instance, the greatest exodus from the country into the towns that has ever been seen—for this is Asia moving; this will be Africa moving. A far higher percentage of the world's population is engaged in agriculture than is necessary to sustain it; and the world is beginning to find this out. Imagine 60 per cent of India in cities. Or, if that is too distant and unlikely, not to say appalling, imagine 60 per cent of China in cities—industrial cities. Or if even that seems too unlikely, though it is on the march now, imagine 60 per cent of Russia in cities.'

Some will dispute this assertion of Colonel Elliot. They will argue, as does *The Times* leading article of 17 May 1943, dismissing the Hot Springs Food Conference: 'There has been much idle talk to the effect that the world already produces enough food for everybody if it were properly distributed. It seems far more likely, going by such figures as we possess, that, even if all the food which is grown or can be grown under present conditions were put into distribution, there would not be anything like enough, particularly of what are called the protective foods, to maintain all over the world a reasonable standard of health and efficiency.'<sup>2</sup> These people will express the doubting

'Gold, Trade and Bread,' *The Times*, 20.4.43.

This forecast was confirmed 2 June 1943 by the report of Section IV of the Food Conference which stated: 'Production of food must be greatly extended.' But later in the report was added: 'It is useless to produce more food unless men and nations provide the markets to absorb it. There must be an expansion of the whole world economy to provide purchasing power sufficient to maintain an adequate diet for all.'



wistfulness of Madame Litvinoff who, when Vice-President Henry A. Wallace of the United States, 'half in fun and half seriously,' said to her: 'The subject of this war is to make sure that everybody in the world has the privilege of drinking a quart of milk a day', replied: 'Yes, even half a pint.'<sup>1</sup>

The answer which puts Colonel Elliot in the right, at any rate in the longer run if not as immediately as he expects, is science and technology applied to agriculture. As the *Economist* states regarding the Middle East, 'shortage of fertilizers and agricultural machinery are the chief obstacles to sound agriculture'. Get every Chinese peasant using machinery to the same extent as the Middle West farmer and you will have the result Colonel Elliot foresees.

## V

The idea that Britain and America will have to take a cut in their standard of living because they will no longer be able to compete with the low-paid labour of the East is a popular economic fallacy of the first order. As Mr. Willkie says, 'to raise the standard of living of any man anywhere in the world is to raise the standard of living by some slight degree of every man everywhere in the world.' Moreover, Mr. Bevin agrees with him. At a luncheon held at the Overseas Club, London, on 13 May to welcome the seventh batch of Indians for industrial training, the Minister of Labour and National Service said: 'Britain has nothing to lose by developing the industrial side of India, for the more we raise the standard of life in India the better customers the Indian people will become for their highly finished manufactures, scientific equipment, and capital goods from this country'.

The reason for this is that if you take the sweating man-power of, say India, and educate them, the fruit of their brains and of their greater skill will bring the world an immense step forward in technology. England uses far more men to extract a ton of coal than does America. She pays her miners less money. But was America at a great disadvantage when she began opening up her coal seams because she lacked the plentiful cheap labour available in England? Did she have to suffer a grave inferiority

<sup>1</sup> Related by Vice-President Wallace in his address to the Free World Association, New York, on 8 May 1942, and broadcast to the nation.

in standard of living? The whole economic history of America has been one where labour has been scarce and expensive compared with Europe. Yet this very problem forced her to develop the machine more energetically than did European countries and when she had done this she found that by transferring the work from the shoulders of man on to the shafts of the machine her economy was more efficient, the output per man so very much greater. This intensified use of machinery is one of the three main reasons why Americans have a higher standard of living than any other country in the world.<sup>1</sup>

We need not be frightened therefore of any lowering of our standard of living resulting from the industrialization of the backward peoples of the world. It is true, of course, that our standard of living *relative* to that of these peoples won't be as high as it is now. But *absolutely* it will be higher and the more we help to raise the standard in these countries, the quicker will this *absolute* rise take place. The same is true inside a country. By raising the living standards of the masses you will certainly reduce the *relative* superiority of the standard of living enjoyed by the upper class, but you will just as certainly increase it *absolutely*. The release, by means of education and equal opportunity, of the talent hidden in the lower classes will produce immense advances in every field of activity and the upper classes will get the benefit of these even more than the lower because, after all, they *are* the upper classes. Compare the material standard of living of an average member of the upper classes in England today with that enjoyed by his great-grandfather. He lives infinitely more comfortably, enjoys far greater immunity from disease, has travelled on the average a great deal more, has been stimulated mentally by a far greater range of ideas, has considerably wider experience of the world, is far less prejudiced and inhibited by traditional taboos, understands infinitely better the physical structure and working of the world he lives in, and so on.

Of course, it will be argued that this is so, but that this type of progress does nobody any good, that people are not happier, that it is really not progress at all but retrogression. People who argue this way are appalled by the seeming vulgarity of the modern world. But have you ever noticed that the people who

<sup>1</sup> The other two are, of course, natural resources and the largest free trade area in the world.

talk like this are to be found almost exclusively among the upper and middle classes? Have you ever heard any member of the working-classes talk like this, except of course, those members of that class who are dependent on the upper classes for their existence—the retainers and servitors? (It is quite natural for the footman to regret the closing down of big houses, because it means no more footmen will be required.)

The fact of the matter is that those who complain about and fear modern progress are looking at the world from a purely static position, a position moreover which distorts their vision of the whole process. They deplore the fact that large numbers of people read the *Daily Mirror*. But does it occur to them that the grandfathers of these readers could not read at all?<sup>1</sup> These critics are shocked at the time spent by the masses in cinemas, in dance halls, in listening to the tripe the B.B.C. puts out on its radio programmes. But would they prefer that they spent their time in gin palaces, or quarrelling and brawling in taverns, or in crime, or in visiting public hangings,<sup>2</sup> which is how their grandfathers spent their time? Do these plaintiffs consider that it is better for the working-classes that they should have every minute of their days filled with primitive chores, living a life and fulfilling a function little better than that of a draught horse or other beast of burden?

This whole romanticization of bygone ages is such nonsense. Because it is mostly the products of the cream, floating on the surface of society, which have been brought down from the past to the gaze of the present, these people go about with the idea that the world is going backwards instead of forwards. Let them shift their gaze for a moment to the condition of the working-class a hundred years ago. No need to go back further. No need to go back so far. Let them read once again the works of Dickens such as *Hard Times*, *Oliver Twist*, *Our Mutual Friend*. Let them read Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, Mayhew's *Life and Labour in London* (1850), J. L. and Barbara Hammond's *The Town Labourer*, *The Village Labourer*, and their *Lord Shaftesbury*. Let them read *Early*

<sup>1</sup> According to R. H. Mottram's chapter on 'Town Life and London' in *Early Victorian England*, edited by G. M. Young (Oxford University Press). 'In 1837 40 per cent of the men and 65 per cent of the women were known to be illiterate.'

<sup>2</sup> Public hangings were not prohibited until 1868.



*Victorian England*, edited by G. M. Young, and Engels's books on working-class conditions around Manchester. Let them read a book just published: *Our Towns*.<sup>1</sup> Is it the people whose lives are described here who are appalled by the vulgarity of modern progress?

A final argument used against the mechanical and technological trend of our civilization, and an argument which is as well founded as the foregoing contentions are ill founded, is that expressed in *The Times's* leading article on Mental Health on 22 May 1943: 'Man's gradual conquest over the disorders of the body caused by infection has been accompanied by an immense increase in disturbances of the mind, the result, no doubt, of the modern pace of living and the complications of existence in an industrialized community.' But the way to remedy that is not to try to hold up the inevitable flow of human progress in other spheres, but to make equal progress in the sphere of mental therapy so that the stream of mankind's development can go forward in full adjustment. It may be difficult, but it is the only way. That is why the formation of a Provisional National Council of Mental Health<sup>2</sup> to carry on the work of the principal voluntary mental health associations (the Central Association for Mental Welfare, the National Council for Mental Hygiene, the Child Guidance Council) is to be so warmly welcomed. As *The Times* comments: 'The comparative immunity of the British citizen to . . . mental disorder may not necessarily continue after the end of hostilities and careful planning for the future is one of the special tasks of the new Council.'

## VI

It has been shown that the countries of the West need have no fears that they will necessarily suffer a decline in their material living standards when the East breaks loose and comes into its economic own. The opposite is the case. But there is another lesson for the West to learn if it is going to enjoy its rightful heritage after all these years of economic bungling. And that is the need to go back to the principle of world division of labour.

<sup>1</sup> *Our Towns: A Close Up*. A study made in 1939-42 by the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare (Oxford University Press, 5s.).

<sup>2</sup> Announced by Lord Justice Scott and others in a letter to *The Times*, 22.5.43.

America's high standard of living is, of course, due in considerable part to the fact that she is the largest free trade area in the world. The larger the free trade area the more can the principle of division of labour be implemented. If Great Britain had been within the same free trade area as the United States before the war, we should have been able to buy Ford V.8 cars for £100 instead of paying £250.

Our heavy tariffs made Lord Nuffield's fortune possible and built up in this country a big motor industry which employed a lot of people. But while *these* people might be said to benefit from the tariffs, they are only a minute proportion of the population, the rest of whom had to suffer from having to pay much more than necessary for a car. Many families went without cars for that reason. The same thing was going on in other protected industries.

Moreover, even those concerned in protected trades do not really benefit more than they otherwise would because if there never had been the tariff the industry would never have grown up and the owners would have put their capital into some other activity and the workers would have been absorbed in some other type of productive process. All the people who were then able to save £150 through paying only £100 for their Ford V.8 together with those Americans who hold a sterling balance on £100 paid them for their automobile, would spend this money (£250 in all) on other products, thus providing the purchasing power on which these other industries would depend for the sale of their goods. While, therefore, the capital and workers would be absorbed in the other industries and would be as well off as if they had been in the automobile industry, the English consumer would have his car (£100) plus other products to the tune of £150 as well, all out of his £250.

There is an idea abroad that, if a country does not build up its industries *inside tariff barriers*, then it will have nothing to sell to lesser developed countries in payment for any raw materials it wants to buy from them. A nation can only achieve a high standard of living, it is argued, if it can fulfil some useful function for mankind, such as producing raw materials or turning them into manufactures. But a nation can only exploit the raw materials that it has; so, if it wants to increase its standard of living, it must be in a position to manufacture. Then, just as a manufacturing

company will be creating the difference in value between the raw and the finished article, will be *earning* that, in other words, so will a nation as a whole. This part of the argument is absolutely sound. But the conclusion drawn from the foregoing is generally this: a country must therefore build up its industry *behind tariff walls*.

This is the part of the argument which is deceptive. A country can only indulge in tariffs at the expense of the community as a whole, as has been demonstrated above in the case of the automobile industry. You may gain a certain amount on the swings, but you lose more on the roundabouts. How then is a country to develop wealth to raise further its standard of living? Answer: by fulfilling that function in world economy which it is most economically fitted and able to do. It may be mining, manufacturing, craftsmanship, flying, shipping, banking, trading, distribution, tourist trade, *objets d'art*, or what you will. By developing various new processes by which it can produce goods cheaper than other countries, or goods of a new design that people prefer to the goods so far produced, a country can increase its standard of living because it is increasing its service to the world community. Only to the extent that a country can provide something, which its own people or the people of other nations want, will a country be able to raise its standard of living.

The most sure way of doing this is by educating people so that every latent ability is fully developed. The ultimate source of all wealth is the skill of man. That is why the Prime Minister told us: 'There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies. Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.'<sup>1</sup> By coddling an industry that cannot render a service to the world community on competitive terms, a nation is not raising its standard of living, but lowering it because it is paying more for certain goods than it needs.

But there is one very good reason for tariffs, though only one. And that is the threat of war. If a nation, instead of manufacturing a product itself, buys it more cheaply from another nation, then if war comes and it still needs this product and the nation manufacturing it is an enemy or neutral, then that first nation is obviously in grave difficulty. Had Britain allowed America to

<sup>1</sup> Broadcast to the nation, 21 March 1943.



make all her cars, we would have enjoyed a higher standard of living, but we should not have had much of a basis for our aircraft industry when the war came. Until, therefore, the possibility of war is removed, nations will continue to try to make themselves independent of other countries in the case of those products essential for conducting a war. And in the case of total war, that covers a large range of products.

A free trade area therefore can only be as big as is the area which is 'free from fear'. The United States could be a free trade area because, for the last 78 years, there has been virtually no possibility of war between the States. Lease-Lend (free giving if it is not free trading) is possible between the United Nations because there is no fear of war between them. 'Freedom from want and freedom from fear go hand in hand.'<sup>1</sup> Let us hope that the threat of war will be removed between a larger and larger number of nations, so that their people can benefit by allowing each country to produce those goods and services which it is best fitted by environment, temperament, skill and education to produce. Mr. Willkie puts it this way: 'I should like to point out one inescapable fact. In view of the astronomical figures our national debt will assume by the end of this war, and in a world reduced in size by industrial and transportation developments, even our present standard of living in America cannot be maintained unless the exchange of goods flows more freely over the whole world.'

Of course, the development of *substitutes* has tended to make nations more independent of others in the matter of raw materials. The Nazi-Fascist countries have led in the drive for autarchy in order to be able to nullify the British blockade. Thus the great development of *ersatz* materials in Germany. And America has had to develop a substitute material for rubber now that the Netherlands East Indies are under Japanese control, just as Germany has to rely on substitute oil to a large extent. But manufacturing these substitutes is very wasteful of man-power. One of Germany's main problems is the ceaseless drain on her man-power caused by the manufacture of *ersatz* materials. At a time like the present when German man-power is stretched to breaking point:

<sup>1</sup> President Roosevelt, in his address of 7 June 1943 to the delegates to the United Nations Conference on food and agriculture which had concluded at Hot Springs, Virginia, some days before.

the damaging effect of the British naval blockade in forcing Germany into this uneconomic form of production is very real. After the war, countries certainly won't want to make goods this expensive and wasteful way if they can help it.

It is not suggested that free trade should reign in the international field completely unrestricted under a *laissez-faire* system as in the nineteenth century. The disadvantages of such a system in the light of modern conditions have shown themselves as clearly in the international as in the domestic field. Economic units have got too big now for the old self-cleansing mechanisms to work. Planning must therefore have its place, but planning must accept the principle that division of labour between the nations (as far as is possible consistent with military security) will raise the standard of living of all peoples. Planning must also take note of the fact that it would be disastrous to large sections of peoples for all tariffs to be immediately done away with. The damage has been done in the past when industries have been built up under the tariff system and workers have been trained in these industries. To remove tariffs wholesale would be to cause immense economic dislocation, most unfair to these workers.

Apart from these reservations, however, the complete removal of tariffs and all other impediments to free trading must remain our goal.

## VII

The war has surely taught us all one thing. That the source of a nation's power and riches depends on three factors: man-power, materials, and organization. The latter, of course, is the problem. But it is a problem which man can solve if he really wants to. He has solved it in this war. Given the will, he can solve it in peace. The war has shown us a new method of approach, especially as regards the unemployment question and as regards freedom of trade.

Extraordinarily enough it was once believed by quite intelligent people during the nineteen-thirties that the only way to get rid of the unemployed was to reduce the number of people available for employment, either by turning women out of the jobs they had flocked into after the Great War of 1914-18, or by emigration, or by restricting the birth-rate, or even by having another war and killing a lot of them off. This was the sort of mentality

which made employers sack girls when they got married; which made people with private incomes wonder whether, if they took a job, they would be doing someone else out of it; which prevented the immigration of refugees. As regards this latter point, the idea still seems to hold. Yet surely the problem of organizing for war has taught people that man-power is an asset, that the more workers there are the better, because, the more workers, the greater is the wealth produced. Instead of trying to cut down production the only effective way is to organize production and distribution so that first, the right kind of goods are produced—the goods that people want; second, these goods are distributed to the people who want them.

Judging by Mr. Churchill's great broadcast of 21 March when he gave us his tentative views regarding a four-year plan of reconstruction, the powers-that-be seem to have got around to this point of view at last. The need for raising the birth-rate seems to be generally recognized now as a good thing for the purpose of keeping at a high level the population of this island. (How recently was it that people were talking about this island being over-populated, and discussing the need for getting rid of the surplus population?)

Yet one of the easiest and most profitable and immediate ways of accomplishing this is to open the doors to the immigration of refugees. The extent to which Hitler has impoverished German science and culture by his policy of expelling the Jews and anti-fascists must now be clear to everyone. With the removal of people like Einstein and Thomas Mann to the United States, did Germany or America gain? One of the chief reasons for America's ability to excel in so many forms of activity is the fact that she drew from Europe people of every nationality, race and temperament, and gave them the opportunity to develop their talents. One has only to examine the contribution which refugees have made to England during the past few hundred years to realize the stupidity of closing the doors to immigrants.

Those who argue that by letting people into the country you are increasing the unemployment problem seem to forget that every extra worker is also an extra consumer. Yet that was the main argument believed by the Governments of most countries during the thirties and which made them turn away the man-



power and talent Hitler was voluntarily giving them. Not only did England lose by such foolishness, but she was guilty of such acts of frightfulness as ordering her police to carry back into the air liner at Croydon screaming men and women who knew that they were being sent to their death or at best the horrors of the concentration camp. The world was disgraced by the ridiculous and heartrending spectacle of shiploads of Jews sailing about the oceans trying to land in one country after another only to be condemned to a continuation of their agony.

Look at Hitler now. He is so desperately short of man-power that he is moving heaven and earth to get people to come to work in Germany. After using every possible device and lure to persuade them to come voluntarily, he is now conscripting people forcibly, using the weapons of terror and starvation, until there are roughly six million foreign workers within the Reich. Moreover, he plans to keep a large part of them there after winning the war.

Asia has far greater resources of man-power and materials than the West. When she solves the problem of organization, the face of the world will be transformed. Does that mean the end of the West? The prospect of an Asiatic renaissance, with the full development of modern science at its disposal, strikes terror into the hearts of many people. Yet it is no use trying to put the clock back, no use fighting futile rearguard actions. The forces of economic and political progress are ineluctable and cannot be stemmed. Like it or not, Asia is on the move, the books are open, the sparks of knowledge are setting alight a conflagration which will make the world unrecognizable before the close of this century. Whether we perish or not in the flames depends on ourselves. That is the problem: What is the answer?

The answer is that proffered by Mr. Willkie. That of keeping one's own house clean and co-operating with the East. If the Western democracies keep their own political organism in healthy condition they need not fear the ideology of Soviet Russia or of any other Power taking hold. Seed does not grow except on ground fertile to it. And Mr. Willkie found in the East, in the Arab countries, in Turkey, in Soviet Russia and in China, besides this ferment of nationalism, besides the awakening of peoples so long asleep, a willingness, even anxiety, to co-operate with the West on equal terms. He found that they

realize as clearly as we do the meaning of Mr. Willkie's Consolidated bomber: that the world has grown too small for the old idea of national sovereignty and international competition. Just as history is a process of mitigation of property, it is also a process of mitigation of sovereignty. The latter is in fact a part of the former. Only a supernational organization will be able to maintain that world peace which is so necessary if the East is to develop its immense resources.

The problems facing all of us after the conclusion of hostilities are staggering in their immensity. But so is man's capability of overcoming them. If we accept this situation and go forward in high hope and with determination to be its equal, the world will be on the threshold of a new life and civilization which will inspire its citizens as they have never been inspired before. For ahead in the distance they will see Mr. Willkie's 'one world'.

*KSAWERY PRUSZYNSKI*

## FOUR RUSSIAN PORTRAITS

### I. A RUSSIAN

THE man sitting on the right hand of the Polish Ambassador, as our guest in Kuibishev, is for Russian literature what Timoshenko is for the army. He stands, officially and incontestably, at its summit. Whatever may happen, that man will stay. He will remain, as he remained after the storm that swept away the throne, the church and property. He knows the emigres' trail, he knows all about the Paris of Russian restaurants, Russian taxi drivers and Russian misery. He returned from far away. Today he is a guest entertained at the Kremlin, his works have penetrated everywhere and his teaching is far more welcome to the young Russian mind than the political lecture or the statistical diagram. In old Russia his name counted among those of the oldest nobility, descended from the boyars and not made by a tzar's passing whim or court intrigue. Men of his family could recall not only times when they served the tzar, but also occasions when they and their kin deposed, crowned and advised other tzars. In the last century the heraldic pride of the family was enriched by literary fame.

Our guest's grandfather had been one of the leading playwrights of Russia; his famous relative was for the novel what Homer had been for the epos, Shakespeare for the drama and Heine for lyrical poetry. Our present guest himself has survived not only the Revolution, but also the successive 'purges' and has grown in fame with every year, with every new batch of Soviet youth coming out into life, with every volume he has published. His books are Russian best-sellers and one of them has become the literary Bible of young Russia.

His part has much in common with that played by Chateaubriand after the French Revolution. Chateaubriand, too, was deeply rooted in the past of France; he, too, returned from exile to reconcile himself with the Revolution—and returned to lead the nation along new, moderate lines. Only that Chateaubriand wanted to reconcile the new France with the Church and the Throne, and with what he considered eternal in religion and rightful in authority. Chateaubriand was universal. The Russian is patriotic. He does not attempt to rehabilitate the church or the monarchy; but he glorifies Russia and pays her homage even when she appears in liturgic robes and the Monomach's pointed head-dress. To the new Russia of the Timoshenkos and Zukovs, of the airmen and tractor drivers. He recalls the Minins and Kutuzovs of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, their struggles and their problems.

That man has written many books; but he has gone through many more changes. It was a difficult task at first. But for several years past, since the word 'Fatherland' returned to favour for the first time since the revolution, the wind of history filled his sails, tearing down those of other writers, whose day is past. Now the hurricane of war carries him at an even greater pace. Every day that fills the chasm between the past and the present lifts him higher. I do not know whom I shall find in Russia when I return there after the war. I do not know what system I shall find there and who will survive or who will not. But I believe that whatever happens, one man will remain on the surface—Alexey Tolstoy—the author of monumental historical narrative about Peter the Great, the tzar-reformer.

His appearance itself reflects his psychological and literary personality. He is large and heavy, with a large fleshy face, with his hair brushed low behind the ears, rather like the Russian clergy



wear it. He speaks in a calm, deep bass, which is very Russian in its tone and power. He looks at people with slanting, Tartar eyes, which are also very Russian. He is known throughout Russia as a gourmet, of the Parisian type. It is amusing to see him pouring out wine, appreciating the finer points of a dish, or smoking a good cigar. People in Russia talk with pride about Tolstoy's villa near Moscow and another one in the Crimea, about his car, his beautiful carpets and other riches. The Russians always like to boast of the prosperity of their writers. But even they are sometimes indignant about 'Tolstoyian luxuries'; and envy is not unknown in Russia. Some jealous Russians told a Pole that, in Vilno, as soon as it had been occupied by Soviet forces, Tolstoy bought 50,000 roubles worth of wine.

'Poor fellow,' replied the Pole, 'Vilno has always had rather bad wine. But next time when he comes to us as our guest, after we have returned there, he will get some better wine.'

Now Tolstoy has gone to Tashkent; and the wicked victims of envy spread the rumour that he is buying there the finest eastern carpets of which there is still plenty in Samarkand and Bukhara. Tolstoy's life is the object of general interest, even in its most intimate details. His vitality contrasts with the reserve and apathy of the new Russians. He recalls the wild exuberance of the Cossacks in Riepin's pictures or of the old merchants of Samara, who used to bathe in champagne their women, whom—like their wine—they used to bring from Paris.

Tolstoy writes much, with the same abandon with which he eats, drinks and loves. He has written recently a drama about the tsar, Ivan the Terrible, and the Polish King, Stefan Batory, which was experimentally produced by Soviet theatres, but was deprecated by the critics on the ground that the author 'flattered the Transylvanian adventurer on the Polish throne at the expense of the "Great Ivan"'. It is a truly Shakespearean subject: an eastern tyrant, one of the most ferocious known to Russia—and a Transylvanian prince, educated at the university of Padua and elevated by the Polish nobility to the throne. The author brought out vividly the rivalry between these two historical figures. He explained to us, gesticulating with his nervous, strong, heavy hands, his view of the matter.

'Batory, of course, was not a Polish patriot—like the Corsican, Bonaparte, who was not a French patriot. Transylvania and

Corsica were merely springboards. Poland and France—stages in a journey. Its goal was for Napoleon—Europe; and for Batory—the European east. Batory was a universalist, Ivan a particularist; Batory was the champion of progress and Ivan of 'starina.' 'Starina' is a beautiful and very Russian word. It means something that belongs to the past, that is doomed to go, but is nevertheless rather attractive.

Ambassador Kot added some historical details about Ivan and Batory. They seemed to interest Tolstoy only in so far as they illustrated the idea of his play. Observing the pleasure which Tolstoy obviously took in wine, the ambassador asked with professional pedantry:

'Does alcohol assist literary work?'

'Ooo—resounded the rich bass—it does indeed.'

'And what helps more—asked the professor—wine or vodka?'

The problem puzzled the great writer. He leant back in the chair, he threw up his head; his whitish Nordic eyebrows came down over the Mongolian eyes, with an expression which was something cruel. He pondered the question for a while and then, slowly, pronouncing each syllable, he boomed: 'Vino-o'.

And then, after an interval, he continued with a deep, guttural 'o': 'and vo-odka'.

Then, either anxious to avoid the suspicion of indiscriminate liking for all spirits, or complying with the professor's scientific interest, he added:

'Wine stimulates thoughts and brandy with black coffee helps the ideas to take form.'

He is a Rabelaisian and Pantagruelian figure, absorbing with equal eagerness a new glass of cognac, interesting historical facts, news from the front and from the kolchozes, over watchful and sensitive. Looking at him, we understand that he had to return to his country, that a man of his pattern could not live on the outskirts of life and the existence of emigrés is always marginal. He is too Russian, both Slav and Mongol, to be able to live long outside Russia. He took a risk to discover Russia beyond the Revolution. He returned and won his gamble.

He is always ready to coin new definitions and generalizations, sometimes striking, though perhaps too hasty. His theories may be superficial, for his studies and meditations may have been characterized by the same nervous haste as his gestures and eating.

But they are convincing and appeal to the imagination; their appeal to simple minds is probably particularly strong. Ancient Russia is not a country of intellectualism.

We talked about Leo Tolstoy and Dostoievski. Is Dostoievski supposed to be officially approved in present Russia?

Alexey shook his head:

—That was the case before, but not now. I think that Dostoievski outdistanced Tolstoy. When the modern Russian wants to learn what life before the Revolution looked like, how the tzars ruled and what happened in Napoleon's time, he reads Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or even *Anna Karenina*. But the Russian wonders even more frequently about questions such as 'Who am I?' 'What sort of beings we are?' and then he seeks a reply to his psychological problems in the works of the author of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*—Dostoievski.

Alexey Tolstoy was silent for a moment.

'But does the modern Russian worry about such problems?'

—More often than the casual observer would think. The average Russian reads much and likes to talk about books. The average Russian remembers what he has read. Now a new class has grown up: the Soviet educated class.

Tolstoy was animated:

—It was the misfortune of our revolution that a socialist system requires a numerous class of people who have an adequate intellectual training. The country needs shepherds; the tractor needs drivers. That was the difference. But the old Russian intelligentsia, although equal to that of Europe in some respects, was too scarce, too frail to deal with the problems of revolution. Moreover it opposed the socialist revolution: at any rate its major part did. It was therefore liquidated. . . .

We saw in a flash the Russians of Paris, Belgrade, Prague, New York.

—We had—carried on Tolstoy—to employ Jews. . . .

The sentence was brief and non-committal. Did the great writer disapprove of the importance attained in Soviet Russia in the first days of the Revolution by many Jews from the obscure ghettos of Ukraine and White Ruthenia? Or did he mean to explain that phenomenon to foreigners? I do not know. Tolstoy has his silences, very eastern and Tartar in their secretiveness. Hi



eloquence is sometimes fiery and brilliant like lava, but it can sometimes set into cold basalt. He can be as mysterious as he is outspoken.

The stream of burning lava went on:

—But now we have brought up a new generation of intelligentsia. It came straight from the people. Some of these new men were born in peasant huts, or in mountain villages, or in the tents of the nomadic tribes of the Tien-Shan steppes. They came from the mass, from the core of the nation. They are engineers, technicians, officials, officers. It is a young class, eager, inquisitive, absorbent. It is the most interesting phenomenon in Russia, far more interesting than the Dnieprostrois, Magnitogorsks, canals and factories. It is man made by revolution, who perpetuates the revolution which made him.

Tolstoy stopped and said:

—These men are an expression of Russia. They carry in them the eternal Russia.

I know that these men are Tolstoy's readers. I know his works, *Peter the Great* in particular. I do not share young Russia's boundless enthusiasm for that book. It recalls the historical painting of the school of Munich. But one must realize that 'Peter' is read in this country by people for whom history is as new as an aircraft factory for a native of Thibet. Tolstoy brings them into the tale gradually, beginning with the story of a Russian boy who slept on a stove and had to get up before dawn to harness the horses, before passing to the problems of European influence in the Russia of boyars. Many of Tolstoy's readers still remember sleeping on a stove in a country cottage and harnessing horses before dawn. Such an opening is both familiar and encouraging for them, people who have just emerged from the amorphous mass of Russian peasantry. Then Tolstoy spreads out slowly the rich canvas of the period, but he takes good care to provide the new readers with familiar analogies. The anarchic Russia of the minority of Peter the Great recalls the Russia of the last tzars; the people who opposed Peter's reform are very much like those whom Lenin threw down and Stalin dispatched: the men who rebuilt Russia under Peter had the blind determination, the ruthlessness and cruelty, fanaticism and the indifference to obstacles in their future successors. The West which thrives on Russian apathy and weakness, the West whose knowledge must be

assimilated in order to surpass it—it is not only the West seen through the youthful eyes of the greatest of the Romanovs. It is also the West seen by millions of young Bolsheviks. Through ermine and brocade, through church incense and court balls, the reader faces the eternal problem of Russia. The young Komomoletz who had grown up in the belief that all the tzars were stupid despots like the last ones, and that all the boyars were anachronistic as those swept away by the revolution, discover precursors of Lenin, predecessors of Stalin and forefathers of Timoshenko. The past is no longer darkness and chaos, while the present is not inaugurated by Marx alone. Things which were proscribed become dear. Tolstoy has good reason for stressing the cruel brutality with which Peter the Great reconstructed Russia: every one of his gory scenes carries the moral that ruthlessness and tyranny are necessary requisites of great achievements. Cruelty and its apology are a striking feature of that writer. The success of *Peter the Great* is like a searchlight in the blackout which has concealed a great nation for twenty-five years. In the light of its beam we see, like in the grim glare of torches, what are the ideals which bring a gleam into the slanting eyes of the nation which carries and drags like heavy eastern furs, like prison chains, its Mongol and Slav heritage.

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY

Alexey Tolstoy's head would look well on a great historical canvas by Matejko or Riepin. Ilya Ehrenburg's head would not match it very well. But if the bombs were to knock off one of the gargoyles which look down on Paris from the Notre-Dame it might well be replaced by Ehrenburg's sad, gaunt, pensive face.

Ehrenburg was one of the writers by whom I had been particularly shaken and impressed. The catholic, traditional, sentimental world of my youth was torn in agony when I first read the blasphemous, rational sarcasms of Julio Jurenita. It was a painful, revolting shock—but one returned to it, like a youth who once tasted dissipation will return, in spite of the disgust of the first experience. It was something like a brutal tank crashing its way into a medieval fortress full of romantic ivy-grown walls, Gothic chapels, dark cellars, intricate heraldry and mouldy water in deep moats. If it had not been for one of Ehrenburg's books about Spain, written just after the fall of Alphonso XIII, I would

have never gone to Spain when the civil war blazed up amidst its arid hills. And Spain was for me a great experience.

Ehrenburg passed through Poland several times in his life and he sometimes wrote about it. I had been under the impression that he was frankly hostile to our country, but after meeting him in Moscow I could revise this view to a certain extent. There are apparently in Poland some things which call up unexpected emotions in the heart of that old sceptic and cynic. The old Polish culture, with its western elements of French and Italian influence; the Polish political quixotry that drove the Poles to all the battlefields and barricades of the world; Polish women—these are the things that Ehrenburg likes in Poland.

I see his figure on the background of the Paris boulevards, of the thronged cafés of Montparnasse, or even Moscow. But the actual scene is different: winter, a small railway station submerged by snow, wooden huts and the steppe—somewhere in the steppe the thousands of tents of one of our divisions. Sikorski, Cazalet, Wyshynski, foreign correspondents, Polish soldiers with frost-bitten feet, in British battle dress, with Polish eagles on Russian caps. In a peasant sledge, wrapped in furs, Ehrenburg with his sensitive face, strange and alien to such surroundings. Ehrenburg, in a huge, heavy fur, in felt snow boots walked around, talked to soldiers and listened to the bitter words about Russia of the Polish soldiers of non-Polish origin. Ehrenburg sympathized with these people as Tolstoy, with a feeling for history alone, could never have done.

Contemplating one of those two great writers, one is compelled to think also of the other, for they bring each other out by contrast. These two portraits, like two beacons, throw a light on the tangled ways of Russia and Revolution over the steppes. But Tolstoy, although he comes out of the past, is also a portent of what may happen in Russia in the near future, while Ehrenburg is rather a man of her recent past. Tolstoy is the Soviet tomorrow and Ehrenburg the yesterday of the Revolution. Tolstoy is Russia; Ehrenburg is the Revolution. Tolstoy is the soil; Ehrenburg the thought. Tolstoy returned willingly from Paris to Moscow; Ehrenburg was always glad to sneak out of Russia to Paris, to Europe. Tolstoy is today the most popular writer in Russia; Ehrenburg is still the Russian writer most widely read abroad. Tolstoy is deeply rooted in the historical past of his



country, he is the descendant of boyars, he writes about the past; Ehrenburg is a Jew, a member of the section of Russian intelligentsia strongly mixed with Jewry, he avoids history. One is linked with Russia by the Suvorovs and Kutuzovs; the other by Dostoievski and the Jasna Polana. Tolstoy's interest in the October revolution is due only to the fact that it was Russian; Ehrenburg is interested in all revolutions: Spanish, Hungarian, the Paris Commune—any revolution. The 'International' is sacred for Tolstoy because it was sung by Soviet soldiers dying at Tzaritzin in 1919, at Perskop in 1921 and now at Stalingrad; for Ehrenburg it is the song which sounded whenever blood streamed on the streets of capitals, wherever revolution sprang up in revenge. They both accept cruelty: no Soviet writer could fail to tolerate cruelty. But Tolstoy savours it; Ehrenburg recoils. Tolstoy is a man of the east, the sight of blood stirs in him the instincts of a beast of prey; Ehrenburg is an oversensitive intellectual, who declares that he is not afraid of blood, but actually dreads its sight.

Such endless contrasting may be a dull method of describing a personality, but the contrast seemed both striking and significant to me when I met these two men. When we were going from Moscow to Kuibishev, in the course of the general evacuation, with President Kalinin, the Narkomindiel and the other embassies, Ehrenburg lost the manuscript of the third part of his *Fall of Paris*: while Ehrenburg was mourning the misery of that distant city, Tolstoy was busy writing about the history of native Russia.

Later I explored Kuibishev together with Ehrenburg. It is one of the old provincial cities of Russia, something like a Soviet Lyons or Birmingham. Ehrenburg saw it for the first time: he had spent most of the last twenty years abroad. He looked with some amazement, but without great interest at the city on the Volga. I am sure he looked otherwise at Rouen, Bruges or Cologne. Alexiey Tolstoy, when I met him, was just returning from Gorki and was on his way to Tashkent. He talked much and with great gusto about Tashkent, which he knows well, and about the peoples of that corner of the Soviet Union. He never asked any questions about France, Britain or the West.

Ehrenburg was very fortunate to have spent so much of his time abroad, especially in recent years. If he had been in Russia, he would have inevitably associated with people of his own kind

and would have had to share their fate at the hands of the G.P.U. The Revolution knows no mercy. Ehrenburg represented in Russian literature, if not the movement, then at least the spirit of the Left, of internationalism and of the Komintern—which was represented in politics by Trotzki and Cziczerin, to some extent by Litvinov at Geneva. It was a very different spirit from that which inspired the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact. While Ehrenburg's revolutionary and critical studies are excellent, his books praising the glorious Soviet achievements are hopelessly dull. In the course of the Soviet evolution, which took Meyerhold off the Russian stage and won popularity for Tolstoy, Ehrenburg's star waned. At the time of the fall of Paris it was almost on the point of extinction. Then Ehrenburg returned to Moscow. His position was very precarious. But the 22nd of June 1941 saved him.

Today Ehrenburg is again at the top, for even in literature there are coalition cabinets in time of war. The wind which fills the sails of Tolstoy's barque helps Ehrenburg too. But it does not carry him as far. It helps, for the war is fought against fascism, against the swastika and the lictors' fasces, for it stretches a hand to all the underground movements of Europe, which use sabotage, assassination and secret press. The Soviet standards are as red as they were at the time of the October revolution, the star on the Soviet soldiers' caps is also the same. But Ehrenburg does not feel at ease in the company of the Kutuzovs and Suvorovs, Pozarskis and Alexander Nevskis, whose ghosts hover today over the Red Army. That is a wind that blows him no good.

Ehrenburg looks everywhere in Russia for Western influence. He discovered Italian elements in the Kremlin towers, but I confess that I could never trace them there. He always speaks with appreciation about the Wawel castle of Cracow, which is so truly Italian, for it was built by architects of Milan, Florence and Naples, who carried their art farther north than they ever did before. Alexiey Tolstoy certainly realizes that the Kremlin is Asiatic and he enjoys it because of that. I sometimes felt sorry for that man with a delicate, sad, contemplative expression, who yearned for his Paris like so many intellectuals in the other capitals of the world. I think that he is probably the only man to be suffering that pang in the huge area between the Volga and Vladivostok. And that makes him a European in exile. And here it makes him very much a figure of the past.

## 'OLD BOLSHEVIK'

The third of my Russian portraits is that of a woman. She would make a fine and interesting portrait by a good artist. Tall, lean and erect, with a finely chiselled face. Her eyes are luminous, sometimes burning with anger or enthusiasm, sometimes softened with human kindness. There is something fierce in her eyebrows in the movements of her head, in the concentration with which she listens and the force with which she speaks. Her hair is short like that of the old suffragettes, greyish, and tussled like that of a young boy. Yes, Helene Felixovna Usijevich might sit for a very interesting portrait indeed.

I might say that she is one of the leading literary critics of Russia, perhaps the best—and Russia always had literary critics of the highest distinction. They may have helped Russian literature to become what it is. But that would be a very inadequate description of Helene Usijevich. I might say that she is the daughter of Felix Kohn, one of the most authentic old Bolsheviks, who died last year in Moscow and was buried with honours, after a long life as revolutionary and writer. His name has a permanent place in the annals of the party and of the revolution. I might also say that the Helene Usijevich is one of those people now very rare in Russia, who took part in the revolutionary activity under Nicholas II, spent some time in his prisons—how humane and liberal were the prisons of the tzar!—and then lived in Switzerland in a small group of revolutionary emigrés surrounding the great figure—Lenin. As a young girl she travelled, after the tzar's downfall, through Germany and Sweden to the Finnish frontier in the famous 'Sealed carriage' in which the general staff of the October revolution was sent to revolutionary St. Petersburg.

—I remember well how journalists surrounded our carriages in Sweden—says Helene Usijevich—and asked questions in English, in German, in French, in Russian. But we only nodded and wagged our fingers to our mouths. Nobody said a word. Lenin had forbidden us to speak. He only smiled.

She has an inexhaustible store of memories, of vivid, striking episodes, which she recalls with freshness and colour. Her sense of humour is very keen. She told us how, after coming to Moscow, she stayed with her husband at the house of his parents. Mr. and Mrs. Usijevich senior were typical respectable middle-class Russians. They read every day a liberal bourgeois daily, which was



their Bible. One day they read in their paper the detailed story of how the young Usijevich couple received from the German General Staff a fantastic sum of money in roubles. . . .

What a scandal!

—My poor father-in-law was completely overcome. For thirty years he had faithfully believed every word he read in the *Svirzevy Viedmosti*, and he thought his son quite crazy, but still an honest man. I saw him looking at me, at first with astonishment and horror and then, as he gradually grew to know me better, with mixed sympathy and incredulity: can this be the notorious Bolshevik woman? Finally, when my husband was not at home, he drew himself near to me in his armchair and asked:

‘Tell me—I won’t repeat it—not even to my wife—you can tell me—how it was with those millions—did you take them from the Germans?’

—And I—says Helene Usijevich—just laughed mischievously: Yes, father, we took them. But I don’t know what happened to the money afterwards, perhaps I stuffed it into a sofa, or maybe I had a hole in my pocket—they’re gone, the three millions. . . . Then they both laughed and old Usijevich’s confidence in the press has never been the same since that day.

Helene Usijevich was at the Smolny Institute, she was at the only attempt of a Bolshevik coup. She was with Lenin everywhere. He was not one of the principal actors of the great drama, but she was one of the chorus—and such people can see most and remember. They also are most typical. Helene Usijevich drinks a lot of good strong tea, she smokes many cigarettes and eats very little. There is in her face some revolutionary asceticism. She likes to talk, she is a splendid story-teller and a brilliant debater. She is the last of the thousands of women of the Russian intelligentsia who did so much to destroy old Russia. Endless night discussions in students’ garrets in St. Petersburg or Moscow, amidst clouds of cigarette smoke—barricades and battles with the police in 1905—throwing of bombs at fat tsarist general governors—women with only one passion: The Cause—that was the world of Helene Usijevich.

She is much less inclined to tell about her war adventures at the time of the civil war. But I know a good deal about them. She was a political commissar at the front, she turned the slack soldiers of Kierenski into Red Army warriors, she was nearly

captured by the Whites, then some Czechs saved her life—story like the scenario of a revolutionary film, as good as the best that Pudovkin or Eisenstein ever made. Then the story breaks off just as it does in Soviet films, which are magnificent when they picture the first days of soviet creation, but much weaker and rather bleak when they deal with the subsequent stages: collectivization, the five year plans and the rest. She is a woman of the years of the Revolution.

No profound knowledge of Russian affairs is required to know that Helene Usijevich has more than once been within a step of making a prolonged study of prison conditions of the U.S.S.R. These things are quite common in this Revolution. Besides, the bold, outspoken woman made many enemies in the literary world. The violent press campaign against her, which broke out some time ago, was very ominous. But then it was suddenly cut short. People whispered one word: Kremlin. Heads bowed again to the passing, slim, straight figure of Helene Usijevich. Her name appeared again on book covers and under literary articles. She went on speaking her mind. She established her own personal freedom of speech. The Revolution decided that it was strong enough to tolerate the frankness of one woman.

A few months after the occupation of Lwow the Soviet authorities decided that their initial policy was not particularly fortunate from the point of view of their own interests. The persecution of the Poles considered to be 'gentlemen' resulted in an artificial growth of the Ukrainian influence. There was a good reason to doubt the reliability of the Ukrainians from the Soviet point of view.<sup>1</sup> When the Soviet authorities began to suspect the Ukrainians, they decided to revise their attitude towards the Poles. The deportations continued, but it was proposed to assist some cultural activities. Helene Usijevich, whose father had belonged to the Polish revolutionary movement before he joined the Russian one, came to Lwow in an undefined capacity, but her disregard of all authority impressed the provincial tyrant. She established contacts with Polish writers and saved some of them from penitentiary deportation to Siberia. She even founded a Polish literary periodical.

<sup>1</sup>The war with Germany confirmed these suspicions. Ukrainians passed to the German side, shot Soviet soldiers, destroyed bridges and generally expressed their feelings towards the Bolshevik rule in rather a forcible manner.

The local Soviet authorities, quick to grasp the trend of the day in Moscow, decided to rename one of the streets of Lwow in honour of Suvorov.

Helene Usijevich burst into the office:

‘What! you want to insult the national feelings of the Poles again? And it is a street crossing Kosciuszko street, too!’

The Soviet officials did not know that the Russian field-marshal had been a successful adversary of the Polish fighter for independence, but they did not want to antagonize Lenin’s menacing comrade, so they dropped their plan.

Helene Usijevich was often shocked in Lwow. She once saw in the street a priest carrying the Holy Sacrament. In the crowd, which knelt down in the street at the sight of the Sacrament, she noticed two Soviet officers, who were also kneeling, rather embarrassed.

‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves?’ she scolded them. ‘Don’t you know this is religious superstition?’

The officers were confused. ‘We knew it was something religious, but our orders are not to offend the religious feelings of the population of the newly incorporated lands. . . .’

Helene Usijevich talks about her visit to Poland with affection, just as she does about the great days of the birth of the Revolution. She found in Lwow a cultured atmosphere and people who had not yet been forced to think in clichés. It was a world that reminded her of the long night discussions over a samovar of tea in students’ rooms, before the Revolution. The revolutionary general Kosciuszko is nearer to her heart than Suvorov, who punished the armies of the French Revolution. She prefers Marx to Peter the Great. There are in her conversation long moments of silence. I then looked at her and I read in her silent face more than she would ever tell me. I can see much in that woman. She is the symbol of a period, of a time of revolt, hope and desire. She is a human portrait of the seventeens and eighteens; she is the last of people who are now phantoms of the past, even more than the scion of boyars writing about new Russia.

#### 4. PAGE OF THE LAST EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

On Sunday afternoon, when snow was already melting and water dripped from rain pipes, one could see in the street of



Kuibishev a tall and personable man wearing a uniform which was that of a Soviet general, but carrying it with a dignity and grace, a pomp and circumstance that are altogether uncommon among Soviet officers. The huge grey fur hat with a general's red top looked like a guardsman's busby, not like a cossack cap. In the cloakroom of the hotel, practically reserved for foreigners, the general tossed off his greatcoat with a gesture which meant that he had long been in the habit of having someone to take it with a respectful bow and smile.

Soviet dignitaries are rather nervous when facing a waiter. They don't know what to do with the menu, what to order and how to order. Their embarrassment is rather attractive. But that Soviet general sat down in the Victorian lounge of the old Commercial Hotel of Samara like an old habitué of the best restaurants of Paris. He studied the menu with benevolent earnestness, he consulted the waiter, he made a few appropriate remarks, he officiated. Old waiters blushed like a grandmother at the sight of the faded carnet de bal of the days of her youth.

In the summer the Soviet general amazed the grey people of Kuibishev even more. He sauntered along the main street on Sunday afternoons, even more magnificent than in the spring. His black boots were not full of creases, like those of other Soviet officers, but gleamed with a superb polish. His navy blue trousers were adorned with a beautiful broad red stripe. The dazzlingly white tunic with gold buttons, gold general's stars on the collar and gold braid on the sleeves contrasted well with the rest of the uniform. The general walked arm in arm with his wife, a handsome, plump woman in an elegant though rather provincial dress: in his other hand he carried a sword. Everybody knew him well, but people always looked round, as though they had seen an apparition from another world.

The uniform did not look quite Soviet to me.

'What sort of uniform does General Ignatiev really wear?' I asked two Soviet officers who were looking at the senior general with an expression of mixed admiration, curiosity and indulgence.

'Oh, it's very complicated,' they said. 'First of all the boots must be foreign. No such boots are made in Russia. The trousers are really part of a Soviet general's uniform, but they belong to the gala dress. The tunic is of type worn by our army in the

summer in the southern Asiatic countries of the Union. A kind of colonial uniform. It is not usual to carry on it all the gold braid of a general. . . .’

Then they laughed good-naturedly:

‘Don’t forget that General Ignatiev started his career in the Horseguards and he always likes a bright uniform. He tries to do what he can with our Soviet drab and he manages quite nicely.

And the Soviet officers, Ignatiev’s juniors by two ranks, one epoch, several social classes and twenty-five years, looked at the ex-guards officer as they would have looked at a museum exhibit, rather like a tank driver looking at a Waterloo grenadier.

General Count Ignatiev is not unknown outside Russia. He has used to travel a good deal and now he is busy writing volume after volume of his memoirs: *Fifty Years in Uniform*. He has already carried his narrative as far as the Russo-Japanese War, during which he served on Kuropatkin’s staff in Manchuria. Much has changed during those fifty years and the uniform worn by Ignatiev has not always been the same. He started in the uniform of the Corps of Pages of St. Petersburg; then he wore that of a cadet, which he changed for the uniform of the Horse Guard and later that of another crack regiment—the Preobrazhenski, I think, but I am not learned in the military history of old Russia. Then it was the uniform of a Russian colonel, worn by the military attaché of the Imperial Russian Embassy in Paris. And then the uniform of a Soviet general. Malicious people in Moscow were said to be sometimes wondering what will be the latest uniform of Count Ignatiev.

He is a brilliant *causeur*, speaking beautiful literary Russian. The new men brought to the top by the revolution have all kinds of local accents and they introduced into common speech many popular expressions, the Russian equivalent of Cockney.

His French is as good as his Russian, and he speaks several other languages fluently. His conversation is perhaps lacking in the dynamism of Tolstoy, the subtle irony of Ehrenburg, the peculiar charm and intensity of Helene Usijevich. He is a drawing-room sporting and military *causeur*. A typical officer of the Horse Guard. He has plenty of stories, mostly very spicy, always amusing and well told. No man could have known more people in one lifetime—St. Petersburg, Paris, the Far East.

The first volumes of General Ignatiev's memoirs are very much like his conversation. It is the life of a son of a family of soldiers and civil servants, holding since several generations important positions in the Army, in the Administration and at the Court: Ignatiev himself, as a young page, had carried the train of Empress Alix at her coronation in Moscow in 1896. The few pages which he devoted to the last tsaritzza contain the warmest words he had put in his memoirs. He writes with some affection about the peasants he had known in his childhood; with enthusiasm about regimental traditions and officers' celebrations; with restraint about his family; but he does not give his feelings to anyone. It seems to be one of the more attractive features of that colourful but not always particularly attractive figure.

Ignatiev has always had a splendid *saillie d'esprit*. During the last war he had been military attaché at the Imperial Embassy in Paris. The tsar eventually lost the throne, governments changed and after a while Ignatiev was left alone in charge of an Embassy without a master. He managed it as he liked, refusing admittance to monarchists, democrats and all others. Complaints were made to Clemenceau. The Tiger asked Ignatiev to call and hauled him over the coals: To whom are you really responsible? To whom do you propose to make a report of your activities?

Ignatiev calmly replied: 'Perhaps to the peasants of my native Tver province.'

Ignatiev really loved the life of a cavalry subaltern, between the drawing-rooms of St. Petersburg and the riding schools of regiments of the guard. Now and then he condemns loudly that decadent world, but one feels that he does so only because he is expected to do it. His readers also turn revolutionary moralists for a moment, but they also do it merely from a sense of duty, gobbling breathlessly the entrancing tale of a fantastic lost world. The philosophical and social observations of Ignatiev seem incongruous in his story of a guards officer. But every anecdote, every account of a ball, a parade, a reception or diplomatic *quid pro quo* rings genuine, vivid and true.

'We, Marxists . . .' says Ignatiev to Helene Usijevich, quite earnestly. She laughs: what a Marxist!

There are many insincere passages in his story. Ignatiev relates that his diplomatic and military career gave him a large number



of high decorations of many countries. 'Now my wife hangs them on the Christmas tree,' he writes. I am sure that the general would love to pin them all on his Soviet uniform and that he aspires for the day when he will be able to do so.

The rise of the Ignatiev family was started by our general's grandfather. He was a young officer in one of the St. Petersburg regiments at the time when, after the death of Alexander I, a group of aristocratic but liberal officers wanted to revolt and compel the tsar to grant a Constitution. Ignatiev was one of the most active conspirators. He took part in the secret meeting on the eve of the day on which the coup was to be made. On the day itself he did take his detachment of troops from the barracks, led it at dawn to the Winter Palace and . . . offered his services to the tsar. A few hours later Ignatiev's friends were all in prison, which they left only to go to the scaffold or to Siberia. Their fellow-conspirator became aide-de-camp and ended his life as minister, senator and count.

Ignatiev the grandson says that his grandfather's sudden change of mind was due to his mother's pleading. That may be so, but as we look at the ex-page of the tsaritsa in the uniform of a Soviet general, we cannot help feeling that the Ignatiev family has some skill in changing trains at the right time.

Tolstoy sought in Soviet Russia the old Russia, he wanted to look upon Stalin as Peter the Great, he saw in Timochenko and Woroshilov new Suvorovs and Alexanders Nevskis. Ignatiev looked in the new Russia for much smaller things. He wanted to find again the atmosphere of regimental feasts and officers' banquets in which he thrived. Now, when 'guards divisions' are formed in the Soviet army, when new decorations are established and the Soviet uniform strays from its revolutionary simplicity, Count Ignatiev's heart warms with joy, just as Alexiey Tolstoy's heart does whenever he sees a gleam of greatness in the history of Russia written in his time. Ignatiev is much more superficial and practical. The court career of his ancestors gave him a suppleness which he developed during his own diplomatic career. He survived, like the old waiters, who enjoy serving him, for he reminds them of old times.

Helene Usijevich is on the best of terms with him. She is the editor of his memoirs—in Soviet Russia every book has an editor as well as an author—and the old Don Juan has won the

heart of the woman revolutionary. She is under his spell. I am sure that, if he had to, he would leave her with even greater ease than his grandfather abandoned the Decabrists, or than he himself deserted the Empress whose train he had carried in church, amidst singing choirs and clouds of incense.

'You don't like Ignatiev?' asked Helene Usijevich indignantly.

I smiled: what could I say? I know that all that we had loathed in the people of Imperial Russia had remained intact in Ignatiev, changing much less than his successive uniforms. I know that he is not the only one of his kind. He is only the most brilliantly coloured specimen of the class.

I therefore replied: 'You know, I must confess that as a man and as a Pole I much prefer old bolsheviks to new converts from the Old Times.'

I wondered for a moment at the bond of sympathy which obviously existed between these two people, so different from each other. Twenty years ago the same Madame Usijevich would have condemned the same Count Ignatiev to death without turning a hair. Thousands of such Ignatievs met their end at the hands of thousands of Usijeviches. It is natural enough that the page of the Empress is anxious to have a political alibi in the person of an old-bolshevik friend, but what about her? Is it merely the work of the old technique perfected in St. Petersburg and Paris? No, it's more than that. The old enemy is, after all, a man of the same epoch, almost a contemporary of her youth. And the world of Helene Usijevich has vanished and perished, in spite of appearances, more completely than the world of the Imperial Courtier. There always comes a time when everything that recalls our youth, even if it was hostile, is closer to us than the surrounding strange new world. That is probably the psychological link between Count Ignatiev, officer of the Imperial Guard, and comrade Usijevich, a woman of the revolution, who came to Russia in Lenin's sealed carriage.

#### POSTSCRIPT

Why, the reader may ask, did you leave your journalist's story to describe four people chosen at random, people who do not play any important part in current events?

My explanation is this: we sometimes wonder what future may arise out of the smoke of war and the mist of uncertainty.

When nothing else avails, one returns to the old methods of chiromancy, the art of reading the future from a hand. It seems to me that these four lives are lines on the mysterious hand of Russia. They can tell us not only four life stories, but also much more of the past and the future of the country.

*H. S. EDE*

## DAVID JONES

DAVID JONES is probably the best water-colourist in Britain today and certainly the best engraver. He is of Welsh blood and a most imaginative artist. His touch with reality, as much as any living artist I know goes back to that absolute which is the unchanging reality underlying the changing actuality of the world which at clear moments our quickest apprehensions see.

For a long time his pictures may seem to the observer muddled, childish and often tortured but as they are lived with they will, I think, surprise that same observer by their real comprehension of a living world. He paints a picture entitled 'Cows' and at first there are no cows—it is a surface of pale colours, a mist, unfocussed. Then as a proper focus is obtained the picture springs into life—his cows become tremendously cows, in innumerable ways the artist has caught the essential cow movement; each one says 'cow' as it were. The movement of the space between them has a strange aliveness too. His field is no ordinary field, and yet it is an ordinary field, the usual which holds always the unusual. It is a field at all times and in all times; a place of animals, a place subject to night and day, to dew on the grass and to bird-song. Monet painted his haystack a dozen times, each time for a different light; Jones paints all the lights in the same picture. The cubists have a variable perspective point, Jones has a variable time point. Such things are details; what is of real importance is that the artist is aware of and sensible to the things represented in his pictures. I remember an anecdote in connection with his painting of trees which illustrates this. He was staying at Rock Hall in Northumberland and had gone to his room to paint the trees of the park, seen from his window. They looked like



cabbages—a great green mass of endless foliage. How *could* anyone paint them. Then almost in a rage he cried ‘but they are trees—trees—trees—they *must* make a picture’, and in an agony of realization, of reaching to the actual and thrilling tree-life, he found an expression in paint. This wrestling to achieve expression is, of course, not unusual since every work of art is the victory out of struggle. I am reminded of El Greco and I sometimes think that David Jones, in his very British way, has some affinity with El Greco. Actually at the age of 24 he was profoundly moved by Greco’s ‘Agony’ which was at that time acquired by the National Gallery in London.

Many years ago I asked Jones for details of his life and in this article I quote much of what he wrote to me at that time and at later dates. He was born on November 1st, 1895, at Brockley, in Kent—his father being James Jones, by profession in the printing trade, son of John Jones, master plasterer, of farming stock from Ysceifiog, in Flintshire. His mother, Alice Ann Bradshaw was daughter to Ebenezer Bradshaw, mast and block maker of Rotherhithe in Surrey, of an English family of Thames-side ship-builders and of Italian extraction on her mother’s side.

In his childhood he was backward at any kind of lesson and was not strong physically; he had no enthusiasm other than drawing. He received from his parents every possible encouragement within their power to foster this inclination. One of his earliest recollections is of looking at three crayon drawings of his mother’s, one of Tintern Abbey, another of a donkey’s head, and the third, a Gladiator with curly hair. Among the childhood things he remembers is his father singing a Welsh song; and through his father he has always cherished a sense of belonging to the Welsh people. Also his father would read aloud out of the Pilgrim’s Progress on Sunday evenings, which left a lasting impression.

The first drawing he can remember making was of a dancing bear in the street at Brockley. At the age of 8 he exhibited at the Royal Drawing Society; work confined to animals; lions, tigers, wolves, bears, cats, deer; mostly in conflict. He wrote that ‘only the very earliest of these show any sensitivity, or have any interest whatever’. Then under the influence of boy’s magazines he did drawings of imaginary mediæval Welshmen on hill sides with wolf hounds; of Russians surrounded by wolves in

snowstorms, but he considered that the vitality of his drawings, done at the age of seven to eight, rapidly became vitiated under the influence of these magazine illustrations, of old Royal Academy catalogues and the general dead-weight of outside opinion, until it was quite destroyed by this pressure as he reached the age of eleven. He shows, however, in these drawings, an interesting power of observation.

At fourteen he became a student at the Camberwell School of Art, where A. S. Hartrick and Reginald Savage were masters. To Mr. Hartrick in particular he feels himself indebted for 'counteracting the baleful vulgarian influences of the magazines, etc., and the current conventions of the schools—in short, for reviving and fanning to enthusiasm the latent sense of drawing for its own sake, manifest earlier, and for an introduction to certain European painters.' From Mr. Reginald Savage he derived a civilizing influence through coming to know the great English illustrators of the nineteenth century: Pinwell, Sandys, Beardsley, etc. and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites. This had the result, however, of making him ambitious to illustrate historical subjects, preferably from Welsh history and legend; alternatively, to become an animal painter. He remained completely muddleheaded, he says, as to the function of the Arts in general.

On 2nd January 1915, he enlisted in the Royal Welch Fusiliers and served as a private soldier with them on the Western Front from December 1915 to March 1918. He was demobilised at the end of 1918, aged 23. The experience of all this period began to assert itself in 1930 and has been always a potent influence.

In 1919 he obtained a government grant to attend the Westminster School of Art under Mr. Walter Bayes, and it was with great keenness that he thought of starting to paint again, with, as he supposed an open mind. He became very interested in the ideas and work of the various English artists associated with the movements theorized in Paris, and began to respond to and be influenced by, these ideas. He became at this time excited by Blake, and the English water-colourists, and it was now that he first came to know the work of El Greco.

Mr. Walter Bayes, was, in his own way, with his insistence on the workman's attitude to painting and on the science of the thing, of further help.

In 1921 he was received into the Roman Church.

He had views about the futility of all art school training, and in 1922 he decided to leave the Westminster School and work with Mr. Eric Gill in Sussex. Here he attempted to learn the trade of carpentry, and at the same time learned the use of the engraver's tools. He proved no use at carpentry, but gradually became an efficient engraver. Occasionally he did a small water-colour drawing.

His work at this time was stylized, conventionalized and heavily influenced by theory, and imitative of primitive Christian art. Nevertheless, the discipline of engraving, of doing jobs however badly, the sharpening of tools and the atmosphere of workshops rather than studio; and above all the clarifying ideas of Mr. Gill, were of great and permanent value to him. In referring to this period he wrote: 'The *unity* of all *made* things became clear. A picture, no less than a candelabra, or a hay-wain must be a "thing", with its own life and way of living, dependent on its own due proportion, proportion due to its own being . . . . From the doctrinal definition of the substantial Presence in the sacramental Bread, I learnt by an analogy, which could not in any way be pressed, that a tree in a painting or a tree in an embroidery must not be a re-presenting *only* of a tree, of sap and thrusting wood; it must *really* be "a tree", under the species of paint or needlework or whatever . . . . Certain ideas explicit or implicit in Catholic dogma had a clarifying and a considerably liberating effect. The Catholic Church's insistence on the reality of matter and spirit, that both are real and both good, acts obliquely in the most surprising connections. It weds form and content, and demands that in each particular the general should shine out, and that without the particular there could be no general for us men, and most important of all is the Church's assertion, against the moralists, that God made and sustains everything *gratuitously*. It is, similarly, this gratuitous quality, in less or greater presence, that makes a painting good or bad . . . This "thing-ness" of a painting has been my sheet anchor in times of bewilderment, that is, at all times.'

He returned to London in 1924 and from 1925 to 1927 went again to live with Mr. Eric Gill and his family, who were then at Capel-y-ffin in the Ewyras in the wilder part of the Black Mountains, a few miles from Llanthony Abbey. It was here





David Jones, *Cows*. (Collection, H. S. EdE)



Human Being. (Collection, MISS SUTHERLAND)



Thorn Cup. (Collection, MISS SUTHERLAND)







and on Caldy Island, where he spent some months with the Benedictines, that he first began to have some idea of what he personally would ask that a painting should be; and from this period there is a recognizable direction in his work.

Most of the year 1927 was spent engraving illustrations for the mediæval Chester Mystery Play dealing with the Deluge, a book published by the Golden Cockerel Press.

His awareness of the life of animals and of trees and of the subtleties of darkness and light is very clearly emphasized in the variety and detail of these engravings and it is of course only our own ability to respond to these things which will enable us to perceive what the artist himself had already seen and experienced; thus bringing to the event of seeing the picture some understanding of what went to make the picture. There is a continuity in the procession of these animals, so that although only very few are shown it is easy to imagine that, sooner or later, all the animals in the world will appear. This is because the artist, instead of thinking photographically of a particular moment, certain animals stepping into the Ark, thought of the whole process of gathering all animals into shelter. It is this comprehensive view which brings such startling liveliness to his water-colours. Perhaps I can come more closely to this by thinking of one in particular. 'Cat in an Armchair', reveals much of Jones' attitude to life, his awareness of surface confusion and his ability to canalize this confusion into essential Order. In this picture to begin with there is indoors and outdoors—the quiet peacefulness and fundamental shelter of a house looking out on to the world. The outside penetrates the inside, yet the inside remains an interior; the trees, seen through the window, springing so naturally from their natural soil could never by any stretch of imagination live on the near side by the window; from which it can be seen that for all the sameness pervading the picture there *is* a difference. Jones has no need to define it with the precision of an Academician, nor would he do so, for indoors and outdoors, town and country, are not so grossly different; an accident has changed their aspect. So recently trees grew where now a cat sleeps in the shelter of an armchair. Windows and walls are, to a certain extent an abstract idea, as the surrealists have endeavoured to manifest. I have lived in a room which edged a busy street full of movement and hurtling lorries.

But for the glass of the window and the thin courses of the wall I should all the time have watched that no vehicle side-tracked over the breakfast table. Yet, with this protection, which is in reality no protection, so proved by a bus going through the garden wall which continued that of my room, I sat in total peacefulness and complete unawareness of the outside world, as though I had been in the heart of the country. The window and the wall in Jones' picture retain that sense of substance being insubstantial. The Academician would have made a conflict between his glass and his no glass—his bricks and his air. He would have needed to hold tightly to the convention of these things in order to convey the shelter of indoors; but David Jones can fuse the two and still retain his shelter and also the less limited openness of the outside. His curtains, too, have their own particular nature; they blow in the wind, they are a barrier against the light, they can enclose the room from an outside gaze and shut off the outside from the inside; yet there is no change for the outside is still close-touching the inside. They are made of thread, fine almost as air, which by the subtle process of the loom gives them substance—but for all that substance the artist does not forget their essential delicacy. His consciousness of the actual life and nature of all that he draws is intense. The cat, for instance, is not of the same nature as the chair. The chair is of wood and has indeed some affinity with the trees outside, but the sap no longer thrusts itself upward; the wood has been cut to conform to a certain shape, it is quiescent. Not so the cat, for all his sleeping he is intensely alive, almost quivering in anticipation of alarm, his feet so forceful and so violent are suspended movement and vitality. Potential alertness is in every line of this cat which sleeps so peacefully until disturbed by our thought. But the chair remains impassive for all our reasoning. Surely *there* is drawing, but I have heard it said by the pundits that David Jones can't draw. They said it of a water-colour he did of Lourdes and I remember once passing through Lourdes in a train, not knowing I was there, and at once I knew where I was because of the picture. The whole atmospheric proportions were the same, the tempo, if I might so call it, of river and buildings and mountains was the tempo of the picture, and yet there was everywhere a visual difference so different as to be almost unbelievable that it was the same place. Now that years have

passed since then, I can no longer, even visually, distinguish the Jones picture from the town of Lourdes. It fits it like a glove the hand.

During the years 1928-1932 Jones did many landscapes and seascapes in water-colour, some portraits and drawings of animals and some oils. In connection with his landscape painting he wrote: 'I always work from the window of a house if it is at all possible. I like looking out on to the world from a reasonably sheltered position. I can't paint in the wind, and I like the indoors outdoors, contained yet limitless feeling of windows and doors. A man should be in a house; a beast should be in a field and all that'.

There is a rare aliveness in his portraits which, were he to develop this direction, may be to the twentieth century what Gainsborough's are to the eighteenth. More than other portraits of today they hold the continuity of a life and vision of their own time. In his 'Human Being' drawn from himself seen in a mirror, though never intended as a self-portrait, there remains even in reproduction, the feeling of a personality; of someone sensitive to an outside world, material and spiritual, of someone with a strange force which comes, not out of the strength of his body, but from the strength of his intention; eyes which collect things inwardly, a body, still yet alert, and fingers which are sensitive instruments at his commanding.

In 1929 he did a series of engravings for the *Ancient Mariner*. A pictorial illustration which is at the same time a work of art in itself, is difficult; but when it illustrates so vital an expression as the *Ancient Mariner* or the *Morte D'Arthur*, this transposing of one medium into terms of another becomes rare indeed, for the engraver must have an effectual response to what the poet has written and in his illustration present it with new living fire. In this series Jones has achieved success. His pictures are no crude rendering of the story, not do they in any way encroach upon the story. They have a life of their own nature, but one which lies so closely in sympathy with the poem that it becomes a vibrant commentary.

'The Bride hath paced into the hall  
Red as a rose is she'.

The old man in the corner detaining the wedding guests; the others—so festive with their feathered hats and frilled clothes.



It is a fantastic and lovely decoration which does not hide but amplifies this event, this almost daily event, of being a Bride. It is the Bride eternal, and I know of no wedding scene which conveys better the pageantry of this occasion.

Another of this series is the death of the Albatross—the falling of an overwhelming disaster, which parallels Melville's amazing description: 'A regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness . . . At intervals, it arched forth its vast archangel wings, as if to embrace some holy ark. Wondrous flutterings and throbbings shook it. Though bodily unharmed, it uttered cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress. Through its inexpressible strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets not below the Heavens . . . the white thing was so white, its wings so wide and in those for ever exiled waters, I had lost the miserable warping memories of traditions and of towns.'

David Jones, in attempting to define some of the things necessary to a good artist, has spoken of 'a certain affection for the intimate creatureliness of things—a care for, and appreciation of the particular genius of places, men, trees, animals and yet withal a pervading sense of metamorphosis and mutability. That trees are men walking, that words "bind and loose material things".' He once wrote to me that Carroll's Alice books and the Hunting of the Snark have in some respects an affinity to his outlook, but which outlook, in his case, may possibly derive from his Welsh connections. The sense always of something other in each thing. He wrote: 'Interestingly enough, the English song commencing "There were three jovial Welshmen" seems to pay tribute to this. In any typical English hunting song, the huntsmen meet to hunt a fox, they hunt a fox and they kill a fox. But the three jovial Welshmen went to hunt a mortal creature, but at the "view" the thing hunted turns out to be a "ship a-sailing", which turns out to be the moon, which turns out to be made of cheese—I forget the sequence and the detail, but it is interesting as marking a quite definite difference of outlook'.

In all David Jones' work is this sense of change, of movement—life perpetual in its ever varied development. It finds kinship in Paul Claudel's 'Satin Slipper' for which he made a drawing. This was done just after the Ancient Mariner series and is

therefore greatly a continuation and consolidating of the ideas found in those engravings.

Paul Claudel says in his note to the Reader: 'Ideas from one end of the world to the other are catching fire like stubble'; and again, 'The trees all over the world are different, but it is the same wind a-blowing. I, the painter, have drawn the picture whose subject is everything.' That's it—to make a picture whose subject is everything; and Jones has always this in mind and in no way neglects local accuracy. I was very interested in a note he wrote me on the *Satin Slipper* drawing. 'The ship is a fairly accurate rendering of a ship of the period, even the steel half-moons that the sixteenth-century pirates used to fasten on the yards of their masts with which to cut the enemy's rigging and sails, are shown and they seemed to be interesting when related to the moon and eclipsed sun in the sky. The Scottish sailor lying dead over the gunwale indicates the whole business of the mercenary mix-up of the time (all the races on different sides on the high seas)—the little cannon on the left is reminiscent of a certain kind of light trench-mortar which used to be used in the European War (1914-18) and yet it is a correct sixteenth-century gun. Always there is an interweaving of periods and thoughts. The action of the picture is imagined in some wide sea in the southern hemisphere—where you feel that there is only sea and the sky full of night and day at the same time. I had rather a job to get the full sense of the inside of the ship, decks, etc., and the guns showing from the port-holes of the lower decks outside.'

In this drawing may be felt too, another force underlying his work, a force which comes through the Roman Catholic Church, about which he wrote '*I don't, of course, mean that any amount of true philosophical or metaphysical definition will aid one bit, necessarily, the painting of a picture. The ability to paint a good picture does not come through philosophy or religion in any direct manner at all. They could only have indeed a damaging effect on the making of things if thought of as providing some theory to work by—a substitute for imagination and direct creativeness; and would so sadly defeat their own object—which is to protect the imagination from the slavery of false theory and to give the perfect law of liberty to our creativeness. To protect in fact, what is natural to man.*'

In his painting of briars and flowers called 'Thorn-cup', he speaks of these same things in pictorial form rather than in words. His skies are full of other skies, his birds sing the songs of all birds. Teapots and cups are emblematic of the meeting together of people, the breaking of bread as it were; his composition is almost the Sacred Grail, the cup of communion held as it is in thorns, impossible to dissociate from the crown of thorns; flowers are not portraits of particular flowers but the idea of flowers, their delicacy and persistence.

These things come from the picture itself and many others, and I am shy of expressing them in words for fear that something too insistent in what I say may obscure rather than clarify.

David Jones came to a full period of painting in 1932, producing in the spring and summer of that year over fifty large water-colours and some oils, of which 'Thorn-cup', 'Human Being' and 'Cat in Chair' are examples! Then came a sudden stop.

Since 1933 he has painted little, largely on account of ill-health. He has, however, produced some writing. His first book *In Parenthesis* has been generally claimed by the leading critics in Great Britain as the finest war book we have yet produced, and in 1938 it was awarded the Hawthornden Prize. It is also a valuable contribution to Anglo-Welsh writing.

It has, I think, resolved for the first time, the war emotions to a core of truth so that it is not a book about the particular war of 1914-18, but of any war or, for that matter, of any coming together of people under conditions of extreme stress. It has made a thing in words, a new life, born of that other life which was war. His great power of observation as a painter is in no way lost as a writer; the smallest casual details making each its clear-cut effect upon the mind. His prose, his words, have a way, as have his paintings, of quickening the perceptions. With the awareness of the artist he has penetrated beneath the outward form to disclose the essential beauty of true living and the eternal need so to live in spite of every obstacle. He speaks of 'ritual words made newly real'. He was telling how simple words of command, a seeming abracadabra in England, assumed real meaning in the trenches. 'The immediate, the nowness, the pressure of sudden, modifying circumstance—and retribution following swift on disregard; some certain, malignant opposing, brought intelligibility and effectiveness to the used formulæ



of command, the liturgy of their going-up assumed a primitive creativeness, an apostolic actuality, a correspondence with the object, a flexibility.' These last words express much of the impression made by Jones's recollection of that period—'an apostolic actuality, a correspondence with the object, a flexibility'.

During the ten years since 1933, David Jones has been able to continue with some writing, but he has never looked upon himself as a writer. It is always his hope to get back to painting in the full sense, that is the medium he feels to be most native to him. In 1936 a few water-colours were done which show the same general characteristics as those of 1932, and again a few were done in 1940. Two pictures illustrating the Morte D'Arthur, recently purchased by the Tate Gallery, were painted: one gradually, in 1939-40, and the other in 1940; and I have seen a third drawing by him which, though now only in process, shows promise of ranking with his best work.

There is a Self Portrait in words by David Jones written at the time he sent me details of his life. 'If you would draw a smith's arm, think of the twisted blackthorn bough—get at some remove from your subject. If you would paint a wedding group, concern your mind with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. If you would draw a bruiser, don't neglect to remember the fragility of "this flesh", or you will be liable to make only a vulgar tour de force and to obscure the essential humanity of your gross man. There should be always a bit of a lion in your lamb.

The successful work of art is one where no ingredient of creation is lost, where no item of the *Benedicite Omnia Opera Domini, Domino* is denied or forgotten.

This is not easy.

It was, I believe, a Welsh poet of the fourteenth century, who remarked of the falling snow, that the angels were at their white joinery in heaven, that the saints were plucking their geese. It is important to be anthropomorphic, to deal through and in the things we understand as men, to be incarnational.

To know that a beefsteak is neither more nor less "mystical" than a diaphanous cloud. God loves both. The painter more than any man must know that the green grass on the hill and the fairy ring are both equally real. He must deny nothing, he must

integrate everything. But he must deal only with what he loves, and therefore knows, at any given time. He will come a cropper if he tries to be more understanding, or inspired, than he really is. Let him love more and more things. "It is better to love than to know" is his golden rule.'

## AUGUSTUS JOHN

# FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—X

TICK, tick, tick, goes my alarming clock, and when I look outside I find the sprawling candelabrum of the great fig-tree has been decorated with innumerable jets of bright green flame. In the distance the minarets and cupolas of Westminster reflect the passage of the hours and always seem a little in advance of my own labouring chronometer. Although the sky is brilliant blue and white, the sun gives no heat and the wind seems to blow fresh from far-off Siberian tundras. In fact, it is the Spring, and it was on such a morning in 1926 that Horace de Vere Cole and I set out on an expedition to Provence. The plan was to walk from Avignon to Marseilles. Horace was a famous walker in the heel and toe tradition and, with his unusual arithmetical faculty, was a great breaker of records, especially when alone. A bit of a poet, his motto might well have been 'Motion remembered in tranquillity'. Perhaps his greatest exploit was the ascent of Etna, and return to the coast within a matter of five hours. In my company the going was not up to this standard, for with my absent sense of time, defective arithmetic and a tendency to linger here and there, our mileage was reduced, though actually when it came to stepping out seriously, Horace could not begrudge me full marks for my footwork. The main thing was to get somewhere in time for dinner. As for lunch, since Horace rarely appeared before mid-day, we used to defer our start till after that function. This suited me very well, for the morning was thus left free for solitary contemplation, the exploration of fresh scenes or more often the renewal of acquaintance with old ones. We had

procured the services of a smart lad to convey our baggage by train to appointed stations *en route* and so travelled light. After a few days of acclimatization at Avignon, we judged ourselves fit to take the road. Crossing the Rhone we first visited the attractive village of Aramon; then recrossing the river by a lower bridge, we arrived one evening at Tarascon. Here after some refreshment my playful friend succeeded in rousing some of the inhabitants to a display of active disapproval. The French are a logical, polite and dignified people, unable by temperament and upbringing to react with anything but impatience to the rude buffoonery of eccentric and unintelligible foreigners . . . Arles was our next resting-place and proved to be a quieter one. In dreamy content I perambulated the familiar purlieus of the little antique city. In the shadow of the ramparts I found, as always, a dark Bohemian band. Indifferent, mysterious and aloof, these outlaws from another world, despised *mangeurs de choses immondes*, as though possessed of some primordial magic, have conserved the talismans of perpetuity and, with contempt, contrive to outlive the dire vicissitudes of peace and war. Again I leaned by the Arena and, aided by an old print, thought of it as in a later age it came to be; a little town in itself within a town, compact with habitations squeezed within the arches mounting in tiers to the skyline, a congested, but astoundingly picturesque hive of insalubrious humanity. And in the ruined Theatre, now cleared of such intrusions and its own debris, I watched again the unsocked children playing on the sunny stage.

Our way next led us by a series of villages bearing such melodious names as Montmajour, Fontvielle, Paradou, Les Baux, Maussane, Éyguières. Someone had bestowed the title of *La petite Grèce* on this region, traversed and conditioned by the Alpilles, that tumultuous range of speckled monticules which is the exquisite crown or chaplet of old Provence. Above the pleasant Val d'Enfer (surely misnamed) the rocks have taken fantastic and improbable shapes like gigantic fungi or mammoth bones and are cut like cheese. The broken towers of an immense fortress rise high above the olive groves and vineyards and are one with their precipitous foundations. Turning south we strike the Crau, a flat and desolate plain closely strewn, nobody can tell why, with round pebbles such as are found in banks by the sea-shore. Our objective, Miramas, was far, the desert wide and the day, like our

tempers, was rapidly shortening. We got there at last, but that night our after-dinner disputations were not prolonged. La Crau had got us down! A short stage next morning brought us to St. Chamas, where an excellent lunch, irrigated by wine from our host's own vineyard, restored our spirits and we dallied long at table. Here again, however, as at Tarascon, Horace de Vere Cole's behaviour was disconcerting and I could clearly see that his style of address was unacceptable in the eyes of the daughter of the house (a most engaging type). Taking advantage, therefore, of his temporary absence, I bade the young woman goodbye, promising her (and myself) to return as soon as possible and unaccompanied. I then set off at a great speed. The road to Marseilles here skirts the northern shore of the Étang de Berre. Across the vast lagoon I discerned the steeples of Martigues, emerging, as it were, from the water, my secondary home-town. Spellbound by the enchanting prospect I slackened pace from time to time, or even in my wonderment would sometimes come to a momentary halt. Whether because of these interruptions, or whether Horace's uncontrollable longing for my company lent him wings, I do not know, but the fact must be recorded that before many kilometres were covered, I heard rapid footsteps approaching at my rear. Turning, I beheld with astonishment the dear fellow coming after me apace. Disciplined to degrade our tour to the level of a walking-match, I slowed down almost imperceptibly and soon we were marching side by side, but in silence. Meanwhile an idea had been forming in my mind. Upon coming to a signpost with the direction 'À Berre', without a moment's hesitation I turned down the lane indicated, as if by pre-arrangement. I could see Horace was both surprised and perplexed, but he followed suit without demur. Berre, where I had never been before, was a tiny fishing village at this time, but, as I was delighted to find, possessed a respectable inn. Here we relaxed and our good humour, which had only been in momentary eclipse, was recovered and with a bit over. At dinner with the inevitable bottle of Chateau Neuf du Pape between us, I revealed my plan. 'We are going to cut out Marseilles and cross the Étang in a fishing-boat tomorrow' I announced. Horace made some feeble objections, but I easily over-ruled them. As a professional pedestrian and record-breaker, he felt his amour-propre endangered by this curtailment of the



original project, but I managed to convince him that by revising our schedule in the way I proposed, our expedition would greatly gain in character and originality. 'Besides I was home-sick for my adopted town and longed to get to work.' All was agreed, and in the morning I found a boat moored to the quay with its skipper aboard. 'Would he sail us across the Étang to Martigues?' 'Sacr-r-ré bougr-r-r-re de nom de nom, mais pourquoi pas?' the fisherman replied. We at once came to terms with this reasonable fellow, embarked and in two or three hours, for the wind was variable, stepped ashore at the *Quai Brescon*, paid off old sacr-r-ré bougr-r-r-re, shook his hand and without argument made straight for the *Café du Commerce*. In commemoration of our little jaunt, Horace gave me a book: *Moussia. La vie et la mort de Marie Bashkirtsieff* inscribed and dated. It is from this I have been able to name the year of the foregoing adventure. The inscription is as follows:—

A.E.J. from H. de V.C.

Souvenir d'une promenade en Provence. Oct. 1926

'With foreheads up, and chests outflung

'We faced toward the blazing sun' . . .

22nd Oct. Marseille.

(So I find it was in the Autumn and not the Spring that the foregoing took place. So much for my memory.)

★ ★ ★

One of my links with the 'nineties' was Arthur Symons. He took a great fancy to me. After his break-down in Italy and subsequent recovery, I saw a lot of him. Accompanied usually by a devoted American lady, Miss Alice Tobin, and always followed at a certain distance by a loathed guardian or keeper, we would meet for meals somewhere in the West End. Symons, after the tragic visitation, to which in one of his writings he had prophetically referred as the 'fatal initiation of madness', had been given, by the specialists he had consulted, two years to live. Unperturbed, he made the best of them and is still hale if not hearty, after some thirty years, though now in discreet retirement. I could not but be impressed by the intellectual integrity of this exquisite poet and critic, in spite of his growing prepossession with the lurid and the macabre. His habitual

excitability was now taking on an ecstatic tinge, the result it appeared, of what I suspected to be an over-estimate of the emotional excesses of his youth. But for Arthur Symons, there was no case but the superlative. With no sense of sin to boast of, I could hardly be expected to share in this infernal, retrospective outlook and met with some impatience his high-pitched professions of turpitude, while his gloatings at the prospect of inevitable damnation left me unmoved. Saturated in Baudelaire, one of the few poets he admitted, he would sometimes pull out with ceremony, his greatest treasure, an authentic autograph of that great poet; but it was only the acknowledgement of a bill. All the same I couldn't quarrel with an intelligence which had, with so great eloquence and penetration, analysed the genius of El Greco and had even been the first to acclaim in print, with sympathy and understanding, my own efforts as a *débutant*. In Arthur Symons' day the now current hyperbole 'as stupid as an Art-critic' could not have been justifiably employed. It was with Symons and Miss Tobin that I underwent my only personal experience of K.O. Issuing from a restaurant I found myself importuned by an insolent fellow whom I answered by simply knocking his hat off: instantly a member of his gang landed me one on the jaw and I fell unconscious. My companions got me into a taxi and deposited me home. I felt this blow for a fortnight, but then no doubt I wasn't in training. I can date this event approximately for while painting Symons' portrait, his attention was frequently distracted by the roar of passing aeroplanes. To the poet all planes were hostile. The first world-war was on. I was then living at Mallord Street, Chelsea, in a house I had built. A Dutchman with a passion for rectangles designed it and it proved thoroughly unsatisfactory. The expense of this building was largely defrayed by a successful exhibition I held at the Goupil Gallery. It consisted of paintings done in N. Wales. Lord Howard de Walden, Josef Holbrooke 'the man Sime' and myself had combined to take a bungalow above Tan-y-Grisiau, near Blaenau Festiniog. Standing high up on the slopes of Moelwyn, it commanded extensive views. It was at Tan-y-Grisiau that I had the privilege of communicating the tune of 'Morfa Rhuddlan' to our musician, who has embodied this fine air in 'Bronwen'; and it was probably hereabouts too, that he first heard the call of the 'Birds of Rhiannon.' I imported

a model to pose for me. Lily Ireland had never been out of London. She felt out of her element in this desolate place and no doubt longed to get back to her jolly old slum. She knew what sheep were, however, having seen similar animals in Hyde Park. Her classic proportions had commended her to Harvard Thomas. This sculptor insisted on absolute immobility and accordingly enclosed his model for some months in a close-fitting wooden cage, as with the aid of callipers and other instruments he constructed in wax an exact replica of her—and a beautiful one. Once, thoughtlessly, I said to him: ‘Why don’t you take a plaster-cast and have done with it?’ His indignation was devastating.

George Moore, too, had, in his way, made use of Lily’s services. He required first-hand documentation for some Cockney character and this girl’s speech was, as a sub-dialect, rich, racy and authentic. Previously to establishing ourselves at Tan-y-Grisiau we had spent some time at Chirk Castle. I was greatly impressed one morning to come upon our gifted host, appropriately clad, cap-à-pie, in a suit of ancient armour and reading (I think) the *Daily Mirror*. This ardent mediævalist would provide us with powerful bows and arrows with which we shot at his deer, fortunately too distant to be in much danger at our inexperienced hands and no hit was scored. The most good-natured of Barons, he bears himself with an air of indestructible solidity. Sime had drawn him confronted by Joe Holbrooke, in illustration of the old conundrum: ‘what happens when an irresistible force encounters an immovable body?’ Whether seated at the piano or at the wheel of his car, the musician’s demoniac energy knew no bounds. In the first case, it is true, we were pleasurably subdued by it, but in the second our emotions approximated too closely to those experienced by the unfortunate pedestrians who found their lives in jeopardy at the master’s approach. Nevertheless, Sime and I found ourselves well compensated for every risk, while exploring this delectable region under Joe’s conduct. At Bala, the Red Lion offered the unique attraction of Welsh whisky, pronounced by Sime, who spoke with authority, to be excellent. Opposite was the Plas Goch Inn, into which, temporarily leaving my companions, I would disappear to cultivate the Romany tongue under the tutelage of Manfrey and sometimes Matthew Wood. At Cerrig-

y-druidion, Mr. Tegid Owen entertained his guests with an air of distinction not often met with in an inn-keeper, and at Blaenau Festiniog Dr. Vaughan manifested equal urbanity and accomplishment as both publican and medical practitioner.

Between such pleasant and necessary halts we watched the endless drama of the sky unfold itself. The mountains shifted and the illumination changed. As if under the direction of a supreme but moody artist, the breathing land was draped in purple or shone again in a dazzling coruscation of blue and gold.

★ ★ ★ ★

George Moore was discussing his *Brook Kerith*. He related how, as a true realist, he had got his friend the sculptor, Prince Troubetskoy, to shoulder a medium-sized man and attempt to carry him from the position of the Cross to an alleged Tomb. Troubetskoy, he said, being a kind of giant, just managed to perform this feat. As we know, according to Moore's story, the victim having been transported in this way, was then revived and smuggled away by his friends to an Essenian monastery on the Jordan, where he lived incognito and in complete seclusion till the arrival of Paul. I said 'But could anyone have possibly survived after being nailed to a cross for all those dreadful hours?' Moore said 'Jesus was not nailed but tied to the Cross.' I was amazed; 'But the nails are canonical! What about doubting Thomas? St. Francis and the Stigmata? The unanimity of Tradition, exemplified in every work of Art and Literature dealing with the Tragedy, since Byzantium?' Moore said 'Let us see what Voltaire has to say, for he knew everything' and, reaching for The *Dictionnaire*, he looked up *Crucifixion* and read that the Romans never nailed their victims to crosses, but always tied them up; a more exquisite form of torture, for it lasted longer. I was still unconvinced. (Were not the Gypsies admittedly accursed for having forged those very nails?) Moore went on to relate his first version of the subsequent events of the narrative which he later altered.

When Paul in the course of his mission stopped at the Essenian monastery he fell into conversation with one of the monks, a grave and reticent man of middle-age. Taking a stroll together, Paul in his zeal for proseletysing, proceeded to instruct his companion in the principles of his Faith, which involved, of course,



a detailed description of the central event, the Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection of the Man-God at Jerusalem. Jesus (for it was He), with some hesitation and diffidence, at last ventured to question the accuracy of this account, for as Hegently announced, 'I am that man', showing in proof of this statement the scars left by the nails. (Here is an inconsistency on Moore's part.) Paul unable to dispute the evident sincerity of his interlocutor, lifted his heavy stick and shouting 'the Devil you are?' brought it down with fatal effect on that devoted head. After which deed he went on his way spreading the Gospel of Glad Tidings and Great Joy. When I come to think of it I may have dreamt all this, for I think Moore denied its authorship later. I was interested in the *Brook Kerith* and also admired Moore's version of *Daphnis and Chloe*. I suggested making some illustrations for both these works. Moore was sympathetically disposed to this project, only remarking with uplifted hands (a characteristic gesture of his) 'I cannot, unfortunately, offer you any money.' I had not for a moment envisaged a commercial transaction. Moore was such an extraordinary character that it was worth partaking of his extremely meagre hospitality at Ebury Street merely to watch his behaviour and listen to his discourse. His sparse collection of second-rate pictures (by good painters), his Aubusson carpet upstairs, his half-bottle of sour wine, all made a proper setting to the grotesque figure in the foreground who with such honesty, love and *naïveté*, expounded his views on literature and sex. Irishmen are incalculable. Seated in the Café Royal with John Quinn and George Moore, the subject of Synge's *Play Boy of the Western World* cropped up and I was shocked to discover that both the literate Quinn and the highly literary Moore agreed in missing the whole point of the play. Against all my protestations these two insisted that the Playboy was a fine, tall, athletic, dare-devil type, when, as Synge made it clear, he was a timid little stump of a fellow, who under the blandishments of those two peerless women Sally and Molly Allgood, decided he had killed his Da and was accordingly made a hero of and *was* a hero till the arrival on his tracks of the Da himself, his head bloody, it is true, but definitely unbowed, as he drove his son home before him like a beaten cur. Little Willie Fay, the very counterpart of the hero, played this rôle as no one will again.

# SONGS OF THE HEART

Poems by  
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LOCKER LAMPSON**

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